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Middle Aged Teachers: Perceptions of Their Careers

by

(C) Warren R. Hingley

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Master of Education

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Date.... September 20, 1984...

ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine what perceptions experienced teachers had about their careers, and to compare those perceptions with the theories of adult development put forth by Daniel Levinson. Eight male teachers, each with over ten years' teaching experience, were interviewed. The subsequent interviews were transcribed and searched for common themes.

Six themes arose from the interviews. These themes were discussed and compared to the themes proposed by Daniel Levinson in his theory of adult development.

The study concluded that in many aspects teachers had not changed significantly since they were studied by Lortie in 1975. The researcher found that these teachers were more consistently involved in professional growth than the general public seems to believe.The researcher also found that many of the teachers were experiencing considerable stress in their lives. The teachers were all concerned about the growth of their students as young people as well as learners.

As a result of the comparison of the teachers' themes with the themes of adult development, the conclusion was made that these teachers seemed to be experiencing a transition at this stage of their lives, which they in part attributed to their ages.

The implications drawn from the study suggested that teacher supervision needs to be redirected towards the teacher as a whole person.

The suggestion were made that supervisors attempt to deal with the reality of stress, and it's affect on some teachers. One implication was that the insights of adult development theory be taken into account in the development of supervision strategies.

The study ended by recommending that the possibilty that stress is a factor related to mid life transitions be further researched, and that research be undertaken to relate adult stage development to teacher supervision.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Canadians in the present decade continue to invest in the public school system . The majority of tomorrow's Canadians will be educated in schools financed by provincial governments and paid for by public taxation. Within this system, public school teachers continue to play an important role in the development of today's youth. Because education continues to be an important process for the development of young people in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing society, it is important to understand today's teachers and their impact on children.

This study sought to examine the ideas and values of one group of teachers; those with many years of teaching experience.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions that these teachers had of their careers.

The main reason for studying experienced teachers comes from the fact that they make up an increasing percentage of the total teaching force. Because of the decline in the number of school aged children in recent years, there are fewer jobs for teachers. Moreover, more stringent economic times have lessened the number of teachers leaving the profession. Thus more older teachers are remaining in teaching and fewer younger teachers are entering the profession. Consequently, the teaching force is aging, as

experienced teachers make up an increasing percentage of the profession.

It is important to understand the perceptions of these teachers, from their vantage point of experience.

The second reason for studying middle aged teachers was to compare their perceptions of their careers with one of theories of adult development proposed by Daniel Levinson (1978).. Levinson and others have written that adults continue to develop as they mature, and that particular periods in an adult's life can be predicted as important stages in their development. Levinson contends that these stages are age-related, and can be times of crucial evaluation and turning points in one's life.

This study therefore compared the perceptions of these teachers with Levinson's theory of adult development, in an attempt to understand their experiences in the light of adult development..

Problem Statement

What perceptions do male teachers, in their forties, working in Edmonton, have of their careers?

Research Questions

What perceptions do these teachers have about their careers?

What common themes arise from these perceptions of the teachers studied?

To what extent to these themes match the themes of adult development put forth by Daniel Levinson?

Methodology

This was primarily a descriptive study, that sought to describe the perceptions of the teachers studied. The perceptions of these teachers were then compared with adult developmental theory. Specifically, the theory of Daniel Levinson (1978) was used for comparison. Because Levinson's study included only men, only male teachers were studied.

The data for this study were gathered by interviewing eight teachers. The eight teachers were selected from a list provided by five graduate students at the University of Alberta, and from a list provided by a staff member at the central office of the Edmonton Public School Board. Two teachers each were then selected from elementary, junior high, senior high and adult education. Teachers were phoned in alphabetical order. They were asked if they would agree to an interview. Those who agreed were interviewed at a location of their choice. Each interview lasted at least one hour. The accounts of these teachers were tape-recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then rewritten as narrative biographies. These biographies were then member checked with the informants, and some changes made.

The biographies were then analysed for concepts and domains and organised into subsequent themes. These themes were then written into the text of the study. The themes and

the extent of their comparison to the themes of Levinson's theory were discussed in the conclusion. The implications of the study were discussed in the final section.

Significance

The findings of this study are significant for a number of reasons.

It is important to know how experienced teachers perceived their careers.

It is important for teachers to bring to a conscious level an expression of their satisfactions and frustrations after many years of teaching. An increased awareness can only help a teacher analyse his skills and strategies, and perhaps renew his commitment to the day to day improvement of some skills and the refinement of others.

This information will be useful for those who supervise and work with teachers, for it will help them, in collabortion with experienced teachers, to understand better the perceptions of the people on the job, and to work toward useful professional development.

The comparison of these teachers' perceptions with the adult developmental stage theory of Levinson was important for two reasons.

Much of the stress that the teachers reported experiencing may be understood in a new light. The discomforts that teachers experienced can perhaps be better understood as a common phase of development, rather than a

sign of terminal burnout.

Moreover, An understanding of one's career in the light of adult development theory can help one to plan for the possible exigencies of a mid life transition.

Assumptions

The assumption was made that the teachers chosen would represent a fair cross section of experienced teachers.

It was assumed that the method of selection allowed for a reasonable cross section of teacher opinion.

The reseacher assumed that interviews would allow for the gathering of relevant, "rich" data.

It was believed that the teachers chosen would be willing to talk about their careers.

It was assumed that while the findings of the study would probably, but not necessarily corroborate Levinson's theory of adult development specifically, they would help in the understanding of how experienced teachers perceived and valued their world.

Finally, it was assumed that themes could be drawn from the data gathered.

Delimitations

This study explored the perceptions of male teachers in their forties, with more than five years experience at their level in an urban school setting.

The study considered only the themes that arose from the discussions with the teachers in question.

The stages of adult development as outlined by Levinson were considered, and only in comparison with those perceptions of the teachers interviewed, from the perspective of that stage in their careers.

Limitations

Because of the method of selection, the findings might not have been representative of the population.

Due to the time restrictions, each informant was visited only twice. The researcher might not have been able to gata data leading to conclusive understanding for comparison with all the themes that Levinson presented.

Because of the somewhat personal nature of the topics explored, the informants may have decided to withhold information.

Since the study considered only men, the findings may not apply to female teachers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ideas about the stages of a man's life are as old as time. The idea that a human life span is separated into a series of discrete stages is fairly new.

In the Middle Ages in Europe only two stages of life were considered; infancy and adulthood. Paintings of the time (Craig: 1976, 09) portray children as simply small adults, involved in essentially the same activities as the rest of the adult population. It was not until the seventeenth century (Aries, 1960) that childhood appeared as a separate stage of life in western literature and art.

Only at the turn of the present century (Hall, 1904) was adolescence defined as a separate stage of growth. The biological stage of puberty (Tanner, 1973) define the physical stage of adolescence. Social factors also play an important part in determining the adolescent stage. Bakan (1971) wrote that the combined factors of compulsory education, and child labour and juvenile delinquency legislation combined to deliniate an echelon of adolescents. Bakan believed that the emerging industrial society of the latter half of the 19th century sought to delay the entry of adolescents into society, partly as a protection for society from the turbulence of the adolescents' behavior, and partly because the new society needed to delay the entry of the youth into society while they were trained in the more difficult skills needed. The increasing technological nature of modern society has only served to perpetuate the

adolescent stage.

While the developmental stages of childhood and youth have become universally accepted, adulthood has until very recently been thought off as a single stage of life, lasting for half a century essentially unchanged, and ending in old age. Gould (1975) stated it was commonly accepted that the adult emerged in his early twenties, equipped with all the accoutrements necessary for a quiescent adult life.

The growing field of developmental psychology now includes a number of psychosocial theories of specific developmental stages in the mental and emotional growth of adults. (Ault, 1983; Craig, 1976; Newman and Newman, 1979). The acceptance of the idea that humans pass through discrete and different stages of growth have led to the use of the term "life span development" (Henry, 1979) in the literature. Henry (1979; 417) points out that there are now enough data about adult development to substantiate middle age as a definite developmental period, identifiable across cultures.

One of the first major identifications of cognitive stages of growth came from the observations of Jean Piaget. Piaget (1976) observed that children go through four definite stages of cognitive growth. The sensorimotor stage lasts from birth to about two. A child goes through a preoperational stage from two to seven. From seven to eleven, the youngster goes through a concrete operational stage and finally emerges as an adolescent after passing

through a formal operational stage from twelve to fifteen. These stages are listed to show the age-relatedness of the developmental stages that Piaget proposed.

Theories of Adult Development

While Paiget's theories deal with the biological adaptions in the cognitive growth of children, others have suggested stages of development that apply to the adult portion of life.

Erikson (1963) suggested that there are eight stages in the life of a person.

The first five stages of Erikson's construct emphasize, as do Piaget's, the biological and cognitive factors influencing growth from childhood to early adulthood. However, Erikson's last three stages emphasize the influence of social conditions as well, on the adult's development (Craig, 1976; 04).

In early adulthood there is the stage of Intimacy versus Isolation. During this phase the young adult deals with the crisis of deciding whether to risk intimate relationships with others, or to remain isolated and alienated from others.

In middle adulthood, there is the stage of Generativity versus Stagnation. Early in his forties, a person considers generativity, the giving of oneself to the younger generation by teaching and learning. He wrestles with this, contrasted to the temptation to devote the rest of his life

to self indulgence and preoccupation with his own concerns, which leads to stagnation.

The last stage of life Erikson calls Ego Integrity versus Despair. Here a person evaluates his life, wrestling with the feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment leading to ego identity, contrasted with the feeling of meaningless and alienation, leading to loneliness and despair. Erikson's theory is one of the fist major theories to propose stages of adult development. The stages that Erikson defined relate to general periods in a person's life. They are however important, because they are sequentiallly defined. Erikson's model is also important, because it was upon this framework that many researchers subsequentially based their research on adult development.

Newgarten (1968) expanded upon Erikson's theory and talked about three stages of life. Her studies showed that a person's self concept and identity changed as one faced all the contingencies of family life, career development, and personal aging. According to Newgarten (1968; 54) people began changing in their fifties, and she defined this period of life as middle age. She found, as did Erikson, that a person became more reflective as middle age approached. The sponsoring of young people became a major concern for many. According to this theory, a person changed from a goal-achievement stage in his youth, to a more self-preoccupied and self-satisfied person in middle age. The change was gradual. Although Newgarten defined three

stages of adult life, she maintained that the changes were more determined by the dynamics of the social world, and the generation in which the person lived, than by age itself as a salient factor.

Career Development Theories

Buhler (1935) was one of the first to talk about the concept of stages of developmental growth in one's career. She deliniated a period which she called "early decline", which by her definition lasted between the ages of 45 to 55. According to Buhler (1935; 227) it was during this period that a person began to face life with a sense of resignation or accomplishment. She wrote that feelings of frustration and depression often resulted when a person sought to adjust to one's social role or psychological makeup.

Havighurst (1953) stated that adult development is based upon stages that relate to learning. He stated that there are six age periods, each associated with a number of developmental tasks. He stated further that a person has to successfully accomplish each task, in order to move on and mature. He said that each of these tasks are age-related, and that a person who fails to master a task at the proper age, may never in fact develop that mastery. Havighurst identified middle adulthood as the period from 30 to 50 years of age. The tasks of this period are those of maintaining an economic standard, and one's social responsibility; dealing with the children and spouses in the

family; and adjusting to one's aging parents and one's own physiological changes.

Super (1957) developed a theory of vocational development in which he stated that the self concept is the most important factor in career development. For Super, the self concept develops through "differentiation", the discovery and development of one's interests, apptitudes and values; and "identifiction", role playing the self concept in the career. A person seeks to implement his self concept by choosing an occupation that allows him freedom of self-expression. Super developed Buhler's five stages of development. Super saw these as stages of career development during the life span of a man. The stages are called growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. He stated that each stage is associated with a definite age range. Osipow (1973, 132) wrote that Super's theory of self concept implementation was largely determined by the life stage development of the individual. According to Super (1957: 129), a person is at the advancement portion his life between 31 and 44. This is part of the general establishment stage, which for Super lasted from age 25 to 44.

Super also said that there are five vocational development tasks which are neccessary for negotiation of the life stages. The development tasks are crystalization, specification, implementation, stabilization and consolidation.

Schein (1978) claimed that there are age-related stages of life through which a man has to pass in three different areas. The three areas are biosocial, familial, and career. During each stage individuals meet choice points and face obstacles. Schein argued that career development could then take place in three different ways. One was to move up in the organization, which Schein called hierarchial movement. Another was to increase one's expertise,called functional or technical movement. The third was a movement toward identifying with the goals of the organization, called inclusion. According to Schein, the tasks of middle adulthood, after 40, depend on whether a person is in a leadership or non leadership role.

Stages of Adult Development

The idea that the stages of adult development are related to chronological periods in a person's life came from two independant sources in the mid-seventies. The researchers were Roger Gould and Daniel Levinson.

Roger Gould and his associates (1972) reported on a study that they carried on at U. C. L. A.. Gould's study began with a number of outpatients at the university hospital. Then it was expanded when a questionnaire was sent to 524 people in the general population, between the ages of 16 and 50. Gould and his team matched the results of the two studies, and left out the themes that they discovered was commmon to all the age levels. Gould saw five stages of

adult life in his research. Each of these stages involved a process of transformation.

The period from age 28 to 34 Gould (1978, 153) called "Opening Up What's Inside." During this stage a person discovers and challenges the assumption that life is simple and controllable. Men accept the challenge of their career and charge ahead, "unblinded by distractions" (72). They return to school to specialize, and strenghten their careers, or start a new career, or they simply begin a career (206). They join the social world for purposes of career advancement.

Many are married with young children and want to establish their generation of parenting (185).

According to Gould (155), this period of life allows for the first awareness of an independant adulthood. A person discovers new consciousness, new strengths and energies, and embarks on a voyage through the less dynamic years of the middle thirties.

Things change during the next decade. Gould calls (217 ff) this decade the Mid Life Decade. Gould defined this stage as the period from 35 to 45 in a person's life. By forty, the pressures of time (217) destroy the illusion of a timeless life. Gould wrote: "Time makes existentialists of us all" (218). A person's naivete disappears forever. The facts of life rush in with death, illness and disease.

A person becomes dissappointed with what he's achieved at work (231), often with a deep sense of personal failure

and resultant biterness over the twenty years just spent.

Gould found that a person at forty is often vulnerable, when time focuses reality and a person struggles to become his true adult self. Gould's theory is related to personality development. His model of adult development does not describe a series of sequential changes tied to chronological age. He does sugggest that certain issues become important at different points in an adult's life. He emphasizes the importance of the fortieth year of a person's life.

Gould's studies are primarily important in this context because they underline that there are stages in a person's life that are predictable.

> Mid-life, then, is not a sedentary or bucolic period. In fact, mid-life is every bit as turbulent as adolescence, except now we can use all this striving to blend a healthier, happier life. For unlike adolescence, in mid-life we can know and accept who we are (307).

The Season of a Man's Life

Daniel Levinson and his associates conducted research on adult development at Yale, which ended in 1973. Levinson and his team interviewed 40 men from four occupational fields. The subjects were interviewed over a period of time from 1968 to 1973.

The Mid-Life Transition

Somewhere between the ages of 38 and 43, Levinson found that men experienced mid-life transition. This bridge became

a passage of concern for everyone and a time of trouble for many.

For the first time in their lives, some men saw the end of their lives. They began to think about retirement, and became preoccupied with how many years they had left. Most began to reappraise the past, often with a sense of what Levinson called "de-illusionment" (193). The illusions of the past disappeared in the reality of mature scrutiny. Some men felt irreparable loss. Others felt liberated, freed from the unrealistic dreams of their pasts.

Sequences Through Transition

The men that Levinson studied travelled through the transition of mid-life with different experiences of success or failure, depending on their life structure to that point. For the successful, it was an advancement within a stable life structure (201). The advancements didn't need to be career related. A man may have developed a sense of fulfillment from other work, maybe moonlighting, or volunteer work. He may have become head of the extended family. For one of the executives in Levinson's study, advancement was leaving his job and moving on (203).

Others faced transition from a serious decline or failure in their lives. These men did not succeed, and they had to decide what to do now that their dream was broken. For some, the failure to become their own man shook them out of a rut, and they found new goals and satisfactions.

Others "broke out" (205). At the start of the transition, they left jobs, families, wives, lifestyles. For these men, the transition was a struggle. Not only did they have to deal with the turmoil in their innner lives, but they had to grapple with the realities of a new life style.

For a few, advancement on the job precipitated a new life structure (207). It was a change imposed.

Finally there were those who had not been able to construct any life structure, let alone a stable one, during their thirties. For them, the mid life transition was what Levinson called "quicksand." It took them years to land on stable ground, leaving a quagmire of divorce, failure, and painful adjustment behind.

Levinson went on to discuss, that for some, the changes they faced were matters of relatively moderate concern. For others, however, this transition became a time of crisis. Levinson reported that eighty percent (199) of his subjects reported serious inner turmoil and social adjustment during this phase of their lives.

The Life Structure

From his studies, Levinson developed the concept of the "life structure" in adult development. The life structure is the underlying pattern of person's life. it is constructed and modified as man responds to the forces that influence him. Levinson's model of adult growth deals specifically with the relationship between life stages and chronological

age.

Levinson wrote that there are seasons in a man's life that all men pass through. Each season is different. According to Levinson, three forces are at work in a man's life. There are the socio-cultural influences that come from a man's family, work and neighbourhood. Secondly, there are the forces of the interpersonal relationships that come from the people he lives with at home and on the job. Third, there are the forces of his own individual self concept that work in his mind.

Levinson found that the life structuring sequences are related stages of alternating stability and transtition. The developmental tasks of the stable periods are those of striving, attaining, making choices, and solidifying ones life. During the transitional stages, a man ends a life structure of the previous stage, and starts to build a new life structure for the next stage. For Levinson, the transitional stages are the most difficult. A man sees the implications of the end of a stage and grapples with the new and unknown stage. For most people, the transitions were uncomfortable; for some, critical.

The tasks of Mid Life

During the mid-life transition, a man faces many tasks. The Young/Old task.

A man still feels young, but he knows he getting older. His children have grown; his parents may have died. He feels a

need to retain his youth, and this conflicts with the knowledge that his youth is gone.

The Destruction/Creation task.

A man may become aware of all the damage he's done to others over the years. He may experience regret. He feels hurt when he recalls all that others have done to him. He may decide to dwell on those things he's started, but hasn't finished yet. He may renew his committment to those things that are still important to him. He feels an urge to pass on to younger people the values that he has.

> ...the real value of a man's legacy is impossible to measure, in his mind it defines to a large degree the ultimate value of his life- and his claim on inmortality. (218...) in the Mid-life transition the meaning of legacy deepens and the task of building a legacy acquires its greatest developmental significance (221).

The Masculine/Feminine Task.

A man relaxes his quest for the macho image. He realises that it's not that important. He may become more involved in the domestic tasks of the family.

The Attachment/Separateness task.

A man re-evaluates his social life. He may decide to withdraw from social contacts. He may by contrast become more involved in community activities.

Themes in The Life Structure

Levinson found that there were definite themes that appeared and reappeared in the stages of the life structure. At mid-life as the tasks were encountered and resolved, the

themes solidified.

The Dream

In early adulthood every man forms a dream for his future. For some, the dream is weak, not more than an unclear plan. For others, it is vibrant and compelling. A young man seeks to create a structure for the dream, and formulate goals to attain it (331). In middle adulthood he has to come to grips with the dream, to see it through to fruition, or to give it up. By mid life, a man's ambition has waned somewhat. From a more selective viewpoint, he lets go off the dream, and although it is a painful transition, he is freed from it's tyranny.

The Occupation

The entire novice phase of adulthood is spent forming the occupation (332). By the settling down period of the early thirties, most men have embarked upon a clear career. By forty, at midlife, a man looks at the ladder of promotion and advancement where he works and evaluates his growth. If the career has lost it's attraction, or if the ladder of promotion has been elusive, a man may decide that there are other things that are important for him.

The Family

During early adulthood, work received the major part of a man's attention and energies. By midlife, he has matured

in his relationships with his family, and may decide that the family now deserves more of his attention. He becomes more domestic.

Mentorship

During his early years, a young man has probably benefitted from an association with an older colleague or friend. He has been guided and sponsored, and hopes someday to acquire the qualities of his mentor. By mid life the relationship has probably died. However, a man with increasing wisdom may now wish to become a mentor (334). He may establish a new relationship with a younger colleague or friend, in whom he sees the cast of the dream he had at that stage.

Individuation

The final phase of mid-life culminates in the process of individuation. Levinson wrote (335) that a man completes the process of reconstructing the life cycle toward the end of the mid-life transition. He integrates the results of the decisions that he has made in wrestling with the polarities of the young/old, destruction/ creation, masculine/feminine, and integration/stagnation attachment/separateness tasks. He emerges as a mature adult, his own man.

For Levinson, individuation is both psychologically and sociologically determined. A man acts with his own mind on the world, but as well the world influences his decisions.

The mid-life transition may be over, but there are more developmental tasks to face:

> The Mid-life transition is not the last opportunity for change and growth. Work on our developmental tasks can continue through middle adulthood and beyond, and there are later transitional periods to facilitate the process. As long as life continues, no period marks the end of the opportunites and the burdens of futher development (244).

Levinson did not claim that the mid-life transition started or ended at an exact age for everyone. he did find that a definite range existed. The onset of the mid-life transition happened between 38 and 43 (191). The range of termination was from 44 to 47. Levinson claimed that between the age of 38 and 47, a man has to come to grips with the past and prepare for the future. During the mid-life transition a man has to review and reappraise the past. He has to begin initiating his new life structure. In the process he has to deal with the polarities that are sources of deep division in his life (192).

A number of studies have been done to seek to draw comparisons between the subjects in Levinson's study and other professionals. Newman (1980) found that school teachers seemed to experience the same sort of transitions that Levinson talked about. Larsen (1982) found in a study of nurses in post graduate study, that they experienced many of the divisions in their lives that Levinson spoke about.

III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a short discussion of the theortical framework for this study and some specific references relating to the methodology used. It concludes with an elaboration of the procedures followed.

Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based upon the constructs of Levinson's theory of adult development. However, the methodology was primarily designed to answer the first of the research questions that sought to determine from teachers what their perceptions of their lives and careers were from the vantage point of middle age. Because the study sought to understand first of all the teachers' perceptions of their lives and careers, few direct questions were used. The men were simply asked to recall their early lives and recount their entry into the teaching profession. In the course of the conversations, they were asked to expand on some of the things they said. The subsequent analysis of the data was basically phenomenological. The researcher sought to extract the meaning that the teachers gave to their lives and careers. The attempt was made to get into the world of the informants, to hear their understanding of their lived experiences (van Manen, 1984).

The procedures followed in this study attempted to follow the basic characteristics of qualitative research (Bogdan and Bicklen: 1982).

The informants were encouraged to choose a location for a "relaxed conversation over coffee". It was assumed that they would choose what was for them a natural setting.

The researcher sought to only describe what the informants valued and shared.

In the analysis, the transcripts were analysed for the inherent meanings that the teachers ascribed to their lives. The major themes were also compared with the themes of Levinson.

The setting for the study was analysed using ethnographic criteria, for it was accepted from the beginning that the teachers would be talking about their lives based on the "tacit premises of Western culture, usually the middle class version most typical of professionals" (Spradley: 1979, 11). The procedures were evaluated against the criteria set for by Spradley (1979: 48).

The informants must be thoroughly enculturated.

Teachers were chosen who had been teaching for at least ten years in the city.

The informants must be currently involved in their culture.

All of the informants were currently working.

The ethnographer should be unfamiliar with the cultural scene.

The researcher had never worked in a city school system. He last actively taught school 10 years ago in a small high school in a small town in Quebec.

There should be adequate time for the interview.

Each informant was asked to set aside one and one half hours at a time which would not be followed by appointments or pressing responsibilities.

The interviews should be non-analytic.

The informants were not asked to analyse their statements or feelings. The researcher emphasized non verbal and paralanguage feedback. Respondants were listened to carefully, and asked to say more about important issues. The researcher used various probes to elicit information that would help the informants remember sequences, and place events in the proper chronological context (Gordan, 1982).

The sessions were designed more as conversations than interviews. The aim was to relax the respondants so that they would feel comfortable and contribute better information. The conversations were planned ahead as informant conversations (Dobbert, 1982, 118), with the emphasis on listening to the informant. Aside from a few focused questions dealing with age, the questions were open-ended. The open ended questions were used to allow the informants to give meaning to their statements, and to avoid researcher bias(Dobbert, 1982). Any other questions that were asked were non directive, mirroring questions. The respondants were given positive feedback, and asked to restate or rephrase what the researcher felt were important statements.

The Pilot Study

Three men were chosen for a pilot study by the method discussed below. They were asked to respond to the variety of open ended questions. The data and the interviews were analysed, and because there were no major changes discovered necessary in the methodology as a result of those interviews, it was decided to use the data for the study. The data from one of the informants was rejected because he was not working as a teacher at the time.

The Procedure

The researcher asked six of his colleagues if they would give him a list of teachers whom they felt would be willing to talk about their careers. The teachers had to have taught 10 years. They had to be men, currently teaching in a city school. In one case a colleague contacted two teachers who agreed to an interview. In all the other cases, the researcher simply phoned the first people on the lists provided, and took the first ones who accepted. In the first six cases, the teachers agreed, and they, with the previous two, became the subjects of the study. The ones who provided the lists were told that they would not be informed whom was chosen. The colleague who chose two people agreed not to divulge their names.

All the teachers were in their forties. All were men. Two taught elementary school. Two taught junior high school. Two taught senior high school and two were adult education

instructors. The informants were phoned and asked if they would agree to an interview. They were told that they would be asked to talk about their careers,and not asked a lot of specific questions. They were told how their names were obtained, but that no one but the researcher knew who was called, and that he would inform no one. The teachers were also told that their interviews would be treated confidentially. They agreed to tape-recorded interviews and were told they would be given the subsequent transcripts to review for accuracy. The researcher agreed to make any changes in the text they wished.

At the beginning of each interview, pleasantries were exchanged, and the tape recorder checked. To begin the interview, the informants were asked to give a short biographical sketch, and share some information about how they got started in teaching; and tell what some of their early experiences were like.

In the course of the conversations, the researcher listened for the teachers to talk about any of the themes that Levinson discussed. When the informants spoke about how they first got interested in teaching, they were asked to say more about any plan they had (Levinson's dream). If they talked about about their early relationships, about who helped them get started,they were asked to say more about that helping relationship (mentorship). They were asked to expand on any involvement with teachers new to the school that they had.. When they talked about their recent

experiences, they were asked specifically if their age had anything to do with their actions and feelings. Finally, each one was given a scenario about leaving teaching, and asked to talk about the important things they would have liked to leave with their students.

Data Analysis

Eighteen hours of tape recordings were gathered from the interviews. The interviews ranged from one hour and forty-five minutes to a little over three hours. The data were transcribed from the tape recordings to separate computer files for each informant. Ficticous names were given to the file headings, and specific geographical information deleted from the data. The files were edited for syntax problems, and irrelevant data like discussions of the weather or politics removed. A printout of the files produced 164 pages of transcripts.

Printouts were then given to each teacher, and the researcher changed any statements that the informants felt did not reflect what they meant.

The files were then searched for significant ideas, that the researcher felt the teachers had shared. Using a wordprocessing scan feature. The sentences containing the words were checked in their own contexts, and the apporpriate sentences and phrases were printed in separate paragraphs. These paragraphs were then collasped into new files, and these files were scanned in the same manner,

using terms that suggested categories of thoughts.

These printouts were then compared with the original transcripts, to see if there were major ideas that were missed using the scan feature.

All the original files were compared to see the extent to which there was substantial agreement on specific ideas. Where five or more transcripts suggested the same major categories, themes were developed. These themes were then developed from the individual transcripts, by quoting directly and indirectly the informants. These themes were then compared with Levinson's themes to determine the extent to which they agreed with the themes that Levinson talked about in his study.

Chapter Four related the teachers' themes. The chapter started with a short biography of each teacher. Then the categories that the teachers discussed as part of each theme were quoted.

Chapter five was written as a chapter of findings. The major themes were discussed own their own strength, judging by the extent of their appearance in the informants' transcripts, and then in the light of their agreement with Levinson's themes.

Chapter Six contained a discussion of the findings. It was divided into two parts. In the first part, the themes arose from the interviews were discussed. In the second part, the relationships with Levinson's theories were discussed.

Chapter Seven contained the conclusions and the implications of the study.

IV. THE TEACHERS' THEMES

The Teachers

Sam

Sam was the youngest of the teachers interviewed. He was 38 years old at the time of the interview. Sam was born in Saskatchewan. He worked at a variety of jobs as a young man before enrolling at university in the late sixties. He began teaching in Edmonton in 1969 for the public school board and had taught in four elementary schools at the time of the interview. Sam stayed at the first school three years. He spent two years at a second school. He worked in a third school eight years. He was in his second year in a surburban elementary school at the time of the interview.

Sam was married and he and his wife had two children. He finished his bachelor of arts degree in 1973, through night school courses. Sam worked part time in construction during his first few years of teaching. He was currently enrolled in an after degree diploma course at the university.

Sam was interested in getting an administrative position, in one of the elementary schools. At the time of the interview he had not succeeded in getting a promotion, partly due, he felt, to an poor evaluation he had received in his fifth year of teaching. He related how his principal had rated him and how the board

subsequently suggested he might be fired. Sam was not fired. He moved to another school where he stayed for eight years and received a number of what he felt were positive evaluations.

Sam talked about his career. He expressed some dissapointment at not getting a promotion, and he talked about how he planned to adjust his life, if no promotion came along. Sam planned to remain in teaching.

Fred

Fred was 44 years old at the time of the interview. Fred became ill when he was 15 and had, since that time, lived with a physical handicap. He dropped out of school at the time.

Fred worked as a young man with an oil company for seven years and then decided to return to school and univeristy. He began working at the school on a part-time basis, while completing his university degree. He began working full time at the school in 1971 when he was 31 years old. He was still on staff at the same school at the time of the interview.

Fred was married and he and his wife had two daughters. He oldest was married and his youngest had recently completed high school.

Fred talked about his career and how he had changed over the years. He expressed satisfaction with his career. He had been involved in a minor way with some of the administration of his department. At the time of the

interview, he was considering the possibility of a promotion to an administrative position. Fred was pleased that he was being considered, but he was not sure he wanted the responsibility of the position. He also said how he enjoyed teaching and didn't want to leave the class.

Dan

Dan was 45 at the time of the interview. He was born and raised in a large American city. As a young man he had started out at university as a student in agricultural engineering. He had also considered becoming a minister. Dan switched into an education program, and graduated as an industrial arts teacher. Dan taught industrial arts, junior high science, and later on special education. Dan talked about working in five schools over the years. He was working in a pre-vocational program in a junior high school at the time of the interview.

Dan also talked about a real estate venture he had been involved in, when he and a partner owned a condominium.

Dan was married and he and his wife had two daughters. The older daughter was completing university, and the younger one was completing high school.

When he was 40, Dan returned to university on a sabbatical to work on a post graduate degree in industrial education. He also took of a half year

because he said he was suffering from burnout. Dan discussed the subject of burnout and the related stress he was experiencing. Dan wasn't sure if he would return to teaching the following year.

Dan discussed the dream that he still had to get back to the land. He wanted to purchase an acerage.

Ernie

Ernie was 47 years old. Ernie had grown up in a small town in Manitoba. He began teaching in rural Manitoba on a special licence. Three years later he returned to university to get his degree. He then taught for four years and again returned to university for a year's study. After five more years of teaching, Ernie and his wife went to teach for three years in a Canadian armed forces base school in Europe. After seven more years of teaching in Edmonton, Ernie had returned to university for post graduate study.

Ernie and his wife came to Edmonton in 1968. Ernie talked about his satisfaction as a senior high school teacher. Ernie had always felt that teaching was where he belonged.

Ernie talked about his early career, and he thought his values in teaching had changed over the years. Besides his teaching, Ernie was involved in a number of city arts organizations, where he had held executive positions. He was on the board of directors of one of these organizations at the time of the interview.

Jim

Jim was 47 years old. He had been teaching for 23 years at the time of the interview. He grew up in rural Alberta and began teaching in a small rural school near the city in 1961. He taught junior high school for one year and moved to an elementary school. Jim then went back to junior high and following that, he became the principal of a small school. Jim then returned to university to complete his degree. Following that he moved to Edmonton and had been teaching there for 17 years. Jim was married and his children were all teenagers.

Jim spoke at length about stress and burnout. He spoke about the pressures of the job, involving disobedient students, insensitive administrators, and a few uncaring peers. He felt considerable pressure on a staff dominated by women at the elementary level. Jim spoke about looking for other work outside of teaching. He said he was looking forward to a transfer to another school. In the course of the interview, Jim spoke at length about the people he had worked with over the years. He talked about the students and the teachers and the administrators he had known.

Robert

Robert was 47 at the time of the interview. He began teaching when he was 19, in a small town in southern Alberta. He graduated from a one year

teacher-training program. Robert moved to Edmonton to teach,where he'd remained since. He returned to university and completed a post graduate degree in 1970.

Robert was married with a family of older children. Robert related how he began teaching junior high school students and how that he was still teaching them. Robert was teaching grade nine at a junior high school at the time of the interview. As well as being a teacher, Robert had been involved in various business endeavours over the years. He was currently managing a small store, as well as teaching.

Robert talked about his years as a junior high school teacher. He spoke about the realities of growing old that were becoming apparent to him. He talked about the difficulty in experiencing middle age, and how he dealt with it. He also spoke about how he had changed as a teacher over the years, and how much he valued the students that he taught.

Tom

Tom was also 47. He was born and brought up in Quebec. He came to Alberta as a young man was in his eighteenth year of teaching in Edmonton at the time of the interview. Tom was married and he and his wife had two young children.

Tom talked about how difficult teaching had been for him over the years. He spoke about the difficulties he had had relating to students, and how he felt he was

only beginning to accept them on their own merit. He spoke about becoming satisfied as a teacher only in the last few years. He talked about a course he had taken, and how that course had helped him become a better teacher.

Tom spoke at length about a dream that he had had over the years. He had wanted to become an architect as a young man, and had only recently come to grips with that dream, and decided consciously to forget it and concentrate on teaching.

Tom had taught junior high school for eight years, and was presently teaching in his tenth year in senior high.

John

John was the oldest teacher interviewed. He was 50 at the time of the interview. John came from Manitoba. He had been in the automotive parts business as a young man in Winnipeg, and he and a friend moved to Edmonton in the mid sixties with the intention of continuing in that business. John was not a high school graduate, and later discovered that he could return to school as an adult, and complete his high school education. John did this, and in 1969 enrolled at the university. In 1971 he accepted a job instructing at the same adult school where he had been a student. In 1973 he obtained a leave of absence and returned to the university where he finished his B.Ed.

John was married. He and his wife had no children. At the time of the interview, John was still teaching at the same school.

In the mid seventies John was asked to help out as counsellor in the school. During the 1975/76 school year, John was granted a leave of absence and obtained a diploma in counselling from the university. John returned to the school and served for two years as a counsellor. He then decided to return to the classroom.

John talked about his experiences as a teacher over the years. He also spoke about the many hobbies he had developed over the past few years. John expressed a sense of satisfaction with teaching. He enjoyed his work.

As the above shows, the teachers interviewed constituted a varied group of adults. Although they had different outlooks on life, and different emphases in their own lives, they did talk about common concerns , concepts, and values.

The Themes

The themes that follow express the main ideas that the teachers had about their careers and their lives. The following summary shows the extent to which the teachers agreed with the themes of the others.

Theme:	Dan	Ernie	Fred	Jim	John	Robert	Sam	Tom
Hard Times:	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Second Choice:	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Having Mentors:	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Being Mentors:	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Caring for Students:	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Dealing with Stress:	yes	no	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes

The Early Years: Hard Times

Ernie: 24 hours a day.

Jim: Trial by fire.

Robert: Cramming information.

John: Getting through the day.

Dan: Working every night.

Fred: Staying in control.

Tom: Teaching the leftovers.

Sam: Being called incompetent.

Seven of the eight teachers found the early years difficult. Ernie was the only one who took it in stride. Ernie started teaching English and Drama in a small town school in Manitoba. He found the first few years tough, but he thrived on that experience:

> When I started teaching, it was like almost 24 hours a day. It was great, that early experience. I went into teaching at a time when teachers were needed, and they were taking them in off the street. I survived. I taught successfully for those three years.

Jim said that it was trial by fire. He started in the junior high in a small town on the outskirts of Edmonton. He really felt: "that perhaps there was a move there to see if I could hack it or not." Robert began his career in a small town in southern Alberta. Like Jim, he started in junior high school. Unlike Jim, who later moved to elementary grades, Robert has remained in junior high. Robert said that he was bombared with preparations in his early years. He went home with mounds of work every night:

> The first few years of teaching, I was the same as everyone, running from fire to fire. You kept thinking that the important thing was to cover the material. In the early part of my career I was always getting the students ready to write the departmental exams. I don't know what it was like for others, but I know it was pretty hectic for me.

> You were under the gun that you held to your own head.
>
> I think I was obsessed like most teachers with cramming information. So I'd look over the curriculum guides and see the list of skills and abilities; the factual things they had to do. I set up my whole class to do this, and then, if not everyone did, I felt I was somehow a failure. I felt that these were the most important things a child could learn.

John began his career teaching young adults in a vocational high school. Materials were in short supply. John's initial concerns were for survival:

> It was the workload. Also, we were short of texts. So I was doing an awful lot, making up extra sheets, making notes for students that didn't have texts, mimeographing stuff for them." Initially my first concern was survival. It was a tough situation for a new teacher becuase I was a week and a half late. The term had already started, and they had had a succession of people who were fill-ins. People who would come in for one day , and kind of grab a worksheet, and say, do this. Somebody else would come in the next day, and they'd (the students) say, what about this? and the substitute would say, I don't know anything about that, I'm just here for the day. So they were a little upset by the time I got in. Which is understandable, eh (laughs)? I think it turned out reasonably well. Like I say, initially, just getting through the day was a major accomplishment.

Dan also began his career in the junior high, where he has been over the years. He had the difficult job of starting out in an industrial arts position in a new school, where most of the material had yet to arrive. In addition, Dan found he had been given special classes. Dan said that he was a workaholic when he started teaching:

> My first half a year I just about blew it in industrial arts. I worked every night and

> weekends because I didn't have a thing in that shop when I walked in in September. It was October before the first desk came around. They gave me three special classes. That was a trying situation.

Fred began his career teaching at a vocational centre, where many of his first students were older than he was. Fred joked that he didn't realize it at the time, or he would have worried about that too. Perhaps it had something to do with Fred's initial concerns:

> When I first started, I felt that I had to be in control of things; the presentation. In teaching a particular lesson, I felt that the information had to come from me.
>
> I remember shortly after I'd started we were given an individualized class that had been started as an experiment. After a month is was just about driving me crazy. I didn't feel I was in control of everything. I had students all over the place. I couldn't handle that. I went to my supervisor and said; this is crazy. I can't do this. My students aren't learning anything, (or so I supposed).

Tom perhaps found the first years the toughest. Tom reflected Ernie's perception from another angle. Ernie found teachers were in short supply, which allowed him to begin teaching without qualifications. Tom experienced the strength of seniority:

> I found it very, very hard. Many times in that first year I wanted to quit. For about three or four years I had to teach all the leftovers. I taught just about everything because I was a new teacher. They said; Okay, the older guys have to have the best subjects. That first year especially; they gave me just about all the subjects that they could find in the school that nobody else wanted to teach. I didn't have much choice. All in all, that was in junior high. Those first four or fives years were very, very hard years.

Tom related how he picked up a good tip from one of the central office staff, who had a daughter in Tom's class. Tom had given the girl lines to write and the dad suggested that there was a better way. Tom was asked if he thought about better ways when he first taught:

> I didn't have a clue. I didn't even think about it. I was too upset all the time to really think about it. I had gone through university. I thought they must have shown me all they had to show me. I thought they were the pros. I thought; kids, well they are brats. They have nothing to show me. But I learned that if we listened, we could learn a lot from the kids.

Sam felt he started off okay. He started out with a Bachelor of Education diploma in 1969, and completed his B. A. at night school by 1973. As a young man he thought about moving up into administration in those early days. He waited several years, because he felt he had to build up his record after his third evaluation:

> I was three years in my first school before I went to a second school. I got my permanent certificate, and received a good evaluation from the principals I had at that first school.
>
> In my second year at that second school, I found I was being put down as incompetent. The principal said this after visiting my class for one hour in the year and a half that I'd been there. When she came to my class, it wasn't a very good lesson. It sort of flopped and I admitted it. She said, fine, she'd come back in a week. So she came back in a week and said that everything was okay. But! When she submitted her report, she sent in the report for the first class she'd seen. That sort of put me off.

Teaching: Second Choice

Ernie, Robert and Jim related how they went into teaching as young men. Ernie said: " I've always felt that

teaching is where I belong." Robert saw it first as simply a job:

> It was a job to start with. I had no idea how long I would stay. I started teaching in junior high. I'm still teaching them. I've always felt at home with the grade nines.

Jim said that he always believed in education, and that he always cared for kids. He considered teaching as part of his plan for life:

> It was definitely a plan. I got into it for a very good reason, much as a minister would go into the ministry.

All the rest had started or done something else before they became teachers.

Fred had worked a few years with an oil company before he decided to go back to school and university. He found that his work was not satisfying:

> After three years, every spring I got restless. there were five or six of us examining core samples from the rigs. We had to examine these things and take out all the microfossils. We had to mount the fossils on slides. I tell you we learned a lot of patience on that job. It was extremely fine work, on a microscope, all day.
>
> Well, the frustration would go away then, and I'd think, well, that job's not all that bad. But it kept getting worse, and I said, this is it! I've either got to make a move or forget about it.
>
> It's funny how it all turned out. One of the other fellows I had worked with had done a fair amount of leg work himself, and often talked about getting out and going back to school. He kind of put a spark under me. It's funny, because I was the one who left, and he's the one who stayed. He's been with them now for over 20 years.

John had a similar experience. He had started out in Winnipeg in the automotive business. He and a friend moved to Edmonton in the middle 60's to find that the auto parts

business was no different in Edmonton, and that the change of scenery didn't make a difference in that career. John was just getting settled with his wife, when he found out about the Alberta Vocational Centre:

> I though, hey, don't tell me there's a school for adults ! I investigated it, looked into it, and eventually got into it. I still recall the day when they phoned and said, are you still interested in school ? I said; I've been waiting for months, lady! Interesting enough. the fellow I came out here with is a neighbour of mine and we're still friends and he still works at the same dealership that he started at in the middle 60's. I kind of get reflections from him what it would be like if I was still there (John laughed). So, ah, when I reflect on it, it was certainly the right move to make...

Dan went into teaching after taking four years in agricultutral engineering. Previous to that Dan had spent a year in a church lay-training school. Before that he had gone to another agricultural college for a year.

Sam did a little of many things before he decided to go into education.

> I worked on construction. I worked as a drywaller. I worked in a grain elevator, and on the oil fields, all for a few months at a time. I even went into the Air Force for a few months and actually applied to join the Mounties, although I didn't make it.

Tom's early ambitions led him toward architecture. He admitted that he's never really shaken that dream. When he was young, he'd had to quit school to return to the farm to work, when his dad became ill. Five years later his dad was well to take over and Tom returned to school:

> I had ambitions to go into engineering or architecture. In fact, my dream at that time was architecture. I still dream about it. Later, when I came to Alberta and decided to stay, I still wanted

to be an engineer. Although I had some credits from back east, they wanted me to go right back to the beginning and start over. That shattered my dream again.

Someone suggested; why don't you try education; they'll give you credit for anything you've taken. It was true ! I went there and they said; this is good and this is good. At that point I'm not really sure why I took education. Just because they gave me the credits, I guess. For quite a few years I regretted that decision afterwards. Now, I don't anymore. I feel it's probably good, what happened to me.

Important Mentors

Tom: The Principal Who Changed His Life.

Robert: Other teachers.

Jim: Other Teachers and The Superintendent.

Dan: The Principal and Staff.

Sam: An Early Colleague.

John: A Colleague.

Fred: Apprenticeship.

All of the teachers talked about people who were important influences on their early lives. In every case, there were people who influenced them in their latter years of schooling, or in their early years on the job. In their early professional careers, some of the positive influences came from their leaders, the principals and the superintendents. In most cases though, colleagues were the significant others. Ernie

remembered early influences:

> I had extremely good role models when I was a student. I had an inspector when I first taught who believed in what we were doing. He gave us positive reinforcement. I had help from officials. I had fantastic support from the community. I had a great group of kids.

Tom talked about how tough it was to go back to school after being out for five years to help his dad. He recounted his first day at the technical school:

> So I went back to the technical school. We took the bus and went to the school. The first day we went to write a test and I couldn't even answer one question. So I went to the principal. I told him my story. I said: That's it, I tired. I'd better go home now, and forget about the whole thing. He said he knew I was older than the other kids. He grabbed the test and threw it in the garbage. He said: That's not important. I want you back. do whatever you can. My goodness ! I'll never forget that man, not ever in my whole life. He changed my life for a much better life, I'm sure.

Tom talked about those who helped him when he started teaching:

> I had excellent friends, most of them in education. Some of the other teachers really helped me. At school I had very good friends. I could talk to them. They kept me going. I could see that I wasn't the only one with those problems. Lots of teachers had the same problems I had.

Tom regretted later one influence of an early colleague:

> I saw one guy, probably the best teacher we had at school. His discipline was perfect.You would never see a kid move his head as much as this (slight nod).You could hear kids yelling in the hall for about a mile, but as soon as they entered his door, there was not even a peep.
>
> I was trying to model myself after him. I thought as long as they did it for him, they would do it for me. But that wasn't my style. I

should have never modelled myself after him. I should have discovered my own style.

Robert talked about having the interesting experience of becoming a teacher in the school where he had been a former student, and adjusting to the new relationships with the staff as a young teacher.

> I think there were a couple of really important models that I used. Most of the teachers were on staff when I came back as a member on the staff. It wasn't the kind There were a couple of teachers that I really looked up to. Not because they were the greatest teachers in the world. It wasn't the information. It was the kind of people they were. These were people that I could talk to or watch. When I saw something that I didn't like in that first year, I could maybe ask a question, or see how they were doing it, and how their influence was felt, especially in the areas of discipine. They were great people in their own right, and their influence was felt in the classroom in a variety of ways. I think that they had some of the perspective that I'm just getting as a teacher. They had moved through the stages, and they had it all sorted out. And they were willing to share. You could see by associating with them the things that were important.
>
> I remember that first time. It was hard to change from being a high school student to being a teacher with them. It was a role change, but I appreciate that little bit of time I was able to associate with them.

Jim had similar experiences:

> Because I had dropped out of school earlier, I felt I had a lot to make up for. I looked at what other teachers were doing, especially in the first year, to see if I was doing as well as I could. I always picked up ideas from them, picked someone else's brains (Jim laughed). The teachers were always professional enough to pick out the errors I was making, and sometimes I pointed things out to them, although you couldn't do that very much. They certainly had it all in the bag.
>
> It was all informal. The Superintendent had a thing about that. He was a good old fellow. I

> feared him to some extent, because he certainly could find fault when he needed to, but he was also positive, and he always pointed out to us that: "You know this is something that you can do with each other as professionals. Why not ? You're making mistakes, sometimes you don't notice them. Why shouldn't somebody point them out and then you'll stop making them and you can become that much a better teacher." That's something I can thank him for. I don't believe I've seen that since.

Dan remembered the principal and staff:

> I had a tremendous principal. It was a powerful staff. It was one of those new schools. Every person was a hand-selected person. So you had a collegial relationship. Everybody was gung-ho. At staff meetings everybody would sit around and share. I know when I left after three years, I thanked the principal for putting up with all my guff. The principal was a good supervisor.

Sam got most of his help from a colleague, who taught grade four and was part time librarian: "She really help me get started in my first school." He mentioned the principal in his first year at the second school was a help to him, but the help came from "mainly colleagues, not administrators."

Both John and Fred had positive experiences with senior colleagues when they started. John remembered a colleague:

> There was a fellow, he was teaching a comparable course. We were both teaching math 15. We were using common exams, which was good at that time because you could compare results and I got some feedback on how I was doing. He was a good guy to work with, very enthusiastic, and very knowledgeable...He was a heck of a good guy to start with.

Fred remembered what he called his apprenticeship.

> I was teamed up with a math instructor for a class a day. He is an excellent teacher. I was able to spend each class assisting him; going around and helping each of the students afterwards. And that kind of served as an apprenticeship for me. I felt that I learned more from him in the classroom in just how to get along with students, than I ever did at university. I felt that I really benefitted from that. It was something that was just done informally.

Being Mentors: Times Have Changed

John: Helping Teachers New To Adult Education.

Fred: Never Had A Student.

Jim: Youngsters Don't Want Advice.

Robert: Informal Help.

Tom: Beginners Are Better Prepared.

Ernie: Such a Big System Now.

Sam: It's a Lonely Profession Now.

Dan: Being a Mentor.

Most of the teachers agreed that they had some experience helping other teachers. They agreed that younger teachers were becoming a rare breed in their schools. Some pointed out that there was no comparison between the schools that they started their careers in and the schools in which they presently worked. John had some experience working with the public school teachers

who had come over to the vocational school. Those teachers hadn't:

> ...necessarily taught our courses here or taught adults. Over the years I guess quite a number of people and I think we probably learned from one another.

Fred had never had a student teacher or the opportunity to work with one. Jim had associated with few younger teachers but he felt:

> ...they're pretty good. I think really good. But they don't really want to listen. I see quite a bit of looking down on older teachers, as if they're not as good, not as effective. I see it around me. It annoys me compared to the things that I do, they're a damned sight better than what they do. They are still going to have to learn.

Robert pointed out that the larger schools inhibited professional interaction, but he had helped where he could. He agreed with some of Jim's comments too:

> There are some teachers that are fairly new to staff. They have thanked me for providing some assistance, cushioning some things, giving them some perspective. I do this when the opportunity arises in the staffroom, or out playing sports. I've encouraged some teachers to take a sabbatical, and gain a different, rather than go mad in the classroom. I think that young teachers are bombarded. They think they're trapped with the parents, and the students, and the media, and the political leaders. That hasn't changed and that's not anything to worry about.
>
> They make reference to hire the new Wayne Gretskys. It's hard when there aren't enough people leaving the profession, or retiring. And of course there's declining enrollment.
>
> We've had some young Wayne Gretskys who have come into our school, who've not been equipped with other than information in their brains. They've been failures, and it's too bad. I wish I could have helped some of them. But

some don't want help, so there you are.

Tom didn't agree: "The young people are better prepared. They know what to expect, much more than I did." Ernie pointed out how things had changed:

> Now I teach in such a big system that I can't begin to compare. I try to remember, if I have had taught with more than one teacher who was directly out of college. The majority of people that I met had previous experience. They got their assistance fromt their departments. In these large schools, that's in place with department heads. Inservicing. It's there. It's up to the individual teacher to get help.

Sam talked about the loneliness.

> I have worked with teachers who have just moved: one about three years ago. I worked with a teacher who just moved into the city system. We shared subjects, and we both learned a lot. You don't really get to share views; information on teaching. Basically it's a lonely profession.

Because Dan worked as a specialist and because he ran a number of school camps, he had more occasion to work with younger teachers, an opportunity he enjoyed.

> I have had the chance to work with young people. I've had student teachers, for example, two or three. I take them along and help them. One of the student teachers had been a former student of mine. Another I met at a course we both took. Two or three weeks later they both volunteered to help at a camp I was running. They came for a full week and slept in a lean-to. It was the easiest camp that I had with the kids because of their help.
>
> I have a friend who has a degree in biological science. We worked it so he student-taught for me. We ended up on a ten-year partnership on a condo. I had a young student who was close to finishing. I took him out on a canoe course in Jasper. You might say that's a continuing type of supervision, on my part, assisting those young teachers.

Present Values: The Students

Sam: One Student Success.

Jim: Caring For People.

Robert: Confidence in Reaching Out.

Ernie: A Feeling of Accomplishment.

Dan: Building Dependability.

Tom: Giving a Sense of Direction.

Fred: Academic Success and Self confidence.

John: Building Pride

The teachers talked at length about their present values. All of the teachers contrasted their values in their early experiences with the values they now held as experienced teachers. The teachers expressed a concern for the whole student. They were more concerned with the young people they were teaching, equipping them for today's world. Sam talked about the satisfaction of seeing a child develop:

> ...seeing some kid develop more potential than was anticipated for him. I had a kid a few years back. One of the parents happened to be from that school where I was supposed to be incompetent. She was a nurse, and she happened to be working with my wife one night. She found out that I was her child's teacher. She started talking about how well that kid had done in class. He was one of the top students in the school that year. The previous four years he had done nothing at that school...I think that's the sort of satisfaction that you get. That's

probably one of the reasons why I keep staying in there. You get some kid that you feel that you have made a difference to.

Jim started out by saying that he probably emphasized academic achievement with his kids more than he used to:

> I think as a person grows older, one gets a little more concerned about the academic achievement of the students. Parents want students to do their best. The only way that you can achieve that with them, is to be prepared to spend some extra time with them...(but) I can see those little guys hanging back, not understanding something, and maybe not caring too much either. But you have to bring the caring part in, you got to get the achievement going so that they feel good inside from what they're doing, that they made it...
>
> I talk about that a lot; caring for people. It's not enough just to do your own thing. I'd like to leave the kids with the understanding that nothing is black or white. We have to be tolerant. We have to understand minorities. We have to understand the people in this world. If there's anything in this world that's worthwhile, it's understanding the world we live; the people that are here. There's no one group that's superior to any other, and there's certainly no way that anyone who's white, black, purple, or green, can say he's better than anyone else. I suppose that's what I'd like to leave them with.

Robert felt that the curriculum was still important, but not nearly as important as the necessity for young people to have skills for today's world.

> To teach someone to write a sentence that begins with a subordinate clause is not very high on the scale anymore. As you come along a little further you find out that there are things in life that are more important. You don't throw out the original concepts and skills, but I think you go well beyond those and try to provide a much wider approach by taking something and looking at it in the world, and saying, well now, how does this fit into what the newspaper is saying today about a certain

topic?

I think you even go a step further and say; if these were my children, what would I want them to know before they stepped out into the real world? I don't know if I'd want them to know a lot of the detailed things that I thought I was teaching the first few years. It was probably a waste of time. I would want them to have a certain attitude toward life. I'd want them to have some confidence in themselves, some sense of self esteem. I'd want them to know about the importance of setting goals in their lives and careers, and reaching out toward them. I would want them to come to grips with the priorities in life; things that are really important, that go well beyond the school.

So I think that if my life as a teacher has been of any value, it's probably been in the area of influencing children to look at themselves and the outside world, and say, how can I come to grips with reality and what can I do that will gain some satisfaction in my life, and what decisions can I make now that will help me to be happy with my future ?

Ernie echoed the same feelings:

I'd like to leave kids with a feeling of accomplishment. They should have a feeling of having learned something. They should have a better sociological perspective than they had previously. They should have some indication of who they are and where they're going; a better understanding of themselves.

I teach totally different subjects now. I'm probably more interested now in developing the student than the subject; the total worth of the student. Now I'm concerned about the qualities of experiences. Its something I never thought about earlier. It's something I think a lot more about now.

Dan shared the same emphasis:

I hope the kids I've will feel differently with respect to self.That is more important than the academic. It's important to learn how to deal with life's situations. What a person really wants is someone who is willing to learn, has a positive attitude, and is dependable. I'd like to have produced students that you can count on.

Tom emphasized a sense of direction:

> In the past few years, the most important thing for me is to give some sense of direction to the kids. I'm not worried about learning. The most satisfaction I have found lately is to be able to talk to the kids, and without pushing them, to give them some direction in life. Some really go along with what you say, and work, and progress. That's the greatest satisifaction I have right now.

Fred wanted his adult students to have academic success, along with self confidence:

> I hope the students go away from here feeling a bit more confident and better about themselves. I hope they've a sense of responsibility that they didn't have before. These are all non-academic things, of course. But many times we get students coming in who don't know, who are very unsure of themselves. They're scared silly. Hopefully, just by working with the students, looking over their shoulder, and telling them that they're doing a good job, you help them. Many times they haven't heard that. So one of the things that I try to do with new students is to try and built up their self confidence: let them know that they're not dumb and stupid.
>
> In addition to going away with a little more self confidence, and perhaps a little more responsible nature, we hope they've gone away equipped academically as well, to pursue the goals that they have in mind. Of course we get some who certainly don't. We try to get them into our short courses, so they at least have saleable skills to use and survive with. Of these two avenues, perhaps the academic part is second.

John had a more anecdotal view:

> I guess in one way there are certain concerns that are givens. These never change. You're anxious for students to do well... I always try to get the message across that if the students don't take pride in what they are doing, they how can they get any satisfaction?
>
> Like in the math 15 class there's quite anumber of them going into registered nursing assistants. So I say to them, look, if you're going into the hospital, do you want somebody calculating a saline drip that's going into your

> arm, if they're going to figure, well that's close enough... Or do you want somebody who's going to take a bit more care, and say, if I'm going to calculate that, it's going to be as accurate as I can make it. That's the kind of thing I try to do. I don't know how successful those kind of things are, but maybe in the future it will come back to them, I hope.

Teaching: Coping With The Job

John: Satisfied Now.

Fred: Keeping Fresh.

Ernie: Enjoying Teaching.

Robert: Analysing Life.

Sam: Questioning Commitment

Don: Stress and Burnout.

Jim: Stress

Tom: Challenging the Dream.

While only two of the teachers specifically mentioned burnout as a problem they experienced, five of the eight discussed the discomforts in their lives, which they expereinced as middle aged teachers.

John was the senior teacher of those interviewed. He did not allude to any personal stress in his present experience:

> ..I think I'm satisified with what I'm doing. I'm not looking at any particular change or disruption... Probably when I was getting

established in teaching, I was looking ahead more than I am now. Thinking about alternatives, that sort of thing. I think now I've gotten established. Certainly every term is new, even if you're teaching a course that you taught before. The group is different, the challenge is different. I think that's what I find interesting about this.

Fred was fulfilled in his position:

> We certainly don't have the financial concerns we had before. We're both kind of slipping into early middle age, or whatever you want to call it. We enjoy our holidays. Personal concerns are certainly diminished.
>
> In the classroom I enjoy the work. I get along well with the students. I enjoy helping them to achieve. I enjoy the response I get from them.
>
> I've been fortunate in that I've had my subjects rotated frequently enough. A lot of time you teach something too often. and you take the material for granted. I've tried to watch myself, and when I find that happening, I've asked for a change. That's kept me kind of fresh.

Ernie was secure and content:

> Security's important because I like to live well. I would get terribly upset if I couldn't pay all my bills. And yet at the same time I like clothing, I like eating well, living in a nice area, in a nice house with nice things in it, and that takes money.
>
> I don't teach only for that. I don't teach only for any one thing. I think anybody that says that they do is absolutely out to lunch. I teach because I really enjoy teaching, and I think that I have something to offer.

Robert analysed his life slightly differently than any of the others. He was concerned about a sense of urgency in his life:

> Now, you look around and say, is my presence of value to anyone ? You have to analyze your life. I was a pallbearer at a funeral recently. As you go through life you're in more and more of these situations where you have to take stock and say, have I accomplished

something worth doing?..I think you definitely do analyse your life and say, allright, I've been at this game for so long. I'm not going to be at it much longer.

Last year I went to a deal at the Four Seasons. Teachers who have 25 years or more with Edmonton Public. I walked in there and it was a shock because I thought I'd walked into an old folks home. People said, what are you doing here ? (Laughs) I thought to myself, maybe I've come to observe. It made me feel a little bit uncomfortable, because it just sort of brought a reality out that we're all growing older and we realise that at the end of this rainbow there may not be too many pots of gold. I don't know...(pause).

..and I think that you analyse almost everything you do. Sometimes you start analysing maybe even to a detrimental stage, and you start second guessing yourself... You have to step back once in a while and say; okay, I'm going a little too far...

I think you feel the urgency to do certain things. You may even move and go somewhere and do something because you feel now that it's essential to do it. I want to accomplish that; right now. Maybe I'm different than others; I don't know. I don't see myself falling off a bridge...it's the urgency of doing things that you haven't done that need to be done, or making amends, or sort of looking at yourself from aside or from up above and saying: in order to be happy with myself I need to be doing certain things. I need to be following certain standards; certain principles. I think as you grow older you find that they're more important than a lot of the frivolous be-happy-now and pay-later things.

I think we can fall into the trap of looking back too much. The more a person looks back, the more chance he has of second guessing his decisions and the more chance he has of maybe getting down on himself. The people I know that suffer depression are mainly people who spend a lot of their time looking back. They have regrets and they don't realise that everyone has made mistakes, and has done things that maybe they're paying the consequences for.

So I think that I probably look back to get perspectives,and I think that I look ahead to get some energy and some enthusiasm. I don't think you get much enthusiasm by looking backwards. At least I don't.

Sam had tried recently for a promotion, but he hadn't succeeded. He reflected on his age, and although he said at first that age wasn't a factor, he changed his mind:

> I think about the future a lot. The way the profession's going right now, if I was to stay in it until retirement, I don't see myself putting in as much as I should, to benefit the kids. Ever since I started to teach, there was always the carrot at the end of the stick. If you did a good job and you worked hard, you would be rewarded in the end...in adminsitration or consulting. I find the carrot's become less and less of a feeling all the time. The only motivation that you get in your own motivation. There's no sort of outside incentive to do a better job. I've thought about this for a few years. In the last couple of years since I've applied for administration and got basically nowhere. ..I see other people I taught with. They don't do anything differently than I did, and they moved up the ladder. Because of that you sort of feel that it's time to give up the ghost.
>
> I imagine what it might be like in ten years, say, down the road. What am I going to be like? Am I still going to be able to put in the same kind of performance as I am now? Or will I want to? If I don't want to, what kinds of things are there to give me an incentive to want to? Right now I don't really see that many incentives outside of myself; incentives to carry on the things you already are doing, like running sports leagues, or volunteering for different committees. I don't know whether I've got to the point where I'm just down on it, or what.
>
> There's the time perspective. You always have to look to the future. I find myself thinking if there's really nothing there as a goal that I can achieve, then the effort will become a lot less.

Don talked about the discomfort of stress. He talked about burnout:

> I have tried to look at it. For me, I'm concerned about my lack of personal individualized feeling for the individual child.

Teachers, with some exceptions, have that problem. Burnout is not caring. Well; it's not not caring. It's discovering that I don't care as much as I feel I should care.

Oh you can call it the midlife crisis, the grey hair type of thing. Personally, I don't attribute it to what a lot of people do; that it's the job. I don't really feel that that's it. I was upset with the ATA survey, because they didn't look at the personal aspects. It's all the other things that you're experiencing. It's just when you go to the job, it's just the breaking point. There are middle age factors, problem crises with your children, household, mortgage problems. People experience this and they go to the job,and say; it's the job. It's so easy, because the job doesn't talk back...

You see, I had a lack of patience; getting careless, negligent, slopping off. I could see it in other people too. I had to learn to lower my expectations, relax some.

I think part of burnout is that we focus on the negative. rather than the positive.

One thing, I don't look back with regret. A lot of people do that. I don't. I really don't wish that I had done something else. The impact that I have had on young people's lives makes me feel good about teaching.

Jim experienced some of the same problems. He considered quitting because he felt that the job was the cause:

Now I'm quite concerned about stress. The toll that it's taken on me. I feel under great stress this year. Perhaps I've been in that school too long. I want to move. I've got to move. See; the average stay in a school is about four years, and I've been told by different people that the way that they survive is to move more often. Maybe I'll have to do that too. I don't know. I know that stress is the one thing that's really getting to me. I don't sleep very good. Sometimes I don't eat very well. I'm just unsure at times. my morale is not too good, but on the other hand I don't let that interfere with what has to be done. But I can't say that I feel very damn good! In fact I'm quite pessimistic about the whole situation.

Last spring I went down to Calgary. My brother's into a business with a fellow.I thought perhaps I could get a job there, making

good money.

(At school) we lay down all of the objectives. we lay down the criteria for meeting those objectives, the methodology and all that. In the elementary, there's too much. I think that in elementary we should change our ways, and specialize with departments, so I can teach my subject throughout the grades. I just think there's too much for me to keep a tab on properly. I can't be a jack of all trades and a master of none. Those days are gone by, and you have to be quite expert at everything you do. If health has got to get the time that it's allowed, then somebody should be quite good at teaching that.

When the supervisor came out to tell us about the revised program, she said, you won't be able to do this with the time that you have available. You're going to have to rob some time from some of the other subjects. How am I going to meet the objectives of the other subjects now, if I've got to rob for that ? I was told that by the science people, by math people. I am battered from post to post, and I don't know if I can handle that.

The deciding factor was what I felt to be a rough shod treatment I was getting from some of the other students when I was trying really hard to change their attitudes and help them whenever I could and show them how they could do better. Some didn't want to. That six I was talking about. I knew it right from the start. They did nothing but give me an immense amount of trouble, I'm not terribly used to doing that. There've been two incidents now in my life, and they're both at that school. So I've been a bit of a novice at how to handle it, but I'll tell you, I'm getting better! It's not enough to be friendly, to show them that you damn well care, because they don't care whether you care, some of them. That really gets to me. I think that's the hardest thing there is to take.

...I know that I have seven more years to teach, and that I could retire early. I probably won't. I've thought that unless things improve and I feel a little better about what I'm doing, that I might retire then and go into some business. Well (Jim sighed), I don't know. I think I'll put in the last five or six years. But that's not the stressful part of it. As you get older and you look back on things, and you look ahead, and you wonder what you've done. That may in itself be stressful, but the most of the stress comes from the job,from the

activities with the students, the administration, or your fellow workers.

Tom talked about the years in junior high and then senior high. He had talked about quitting a number of times of the years, and had threatened to quit twice. He was tempted to get out and make big money like some others had done. Then he took a course:

> My style and attitude has definitely changed in the last two or three years. I feel happier about it. Like, there are days when you are tired like anyone else. You feel tired and you want to quit. But it's not serious. It's more just being tired, than anything else. I definitely feel that there's a big change.
>
> There were two reasons that I took that course. One was the credits. And it was said that it was a nice course and I would enjoy it , so I said, gee, fine, I like to enjoy my courses. Since I'm going to take them, I may as well enjoy them. That was one reason. The main reason was that I was looking for an avenue to improve myself. I didn't want to take any course just to get three credits, or six credits and that's that. I wanted something out of it,because I knew I had a problem. Nobody else helped me so I had to help myself. I would say that the main reason I took the course was that I didn't know how to intermingle with the kids. I would come home after school and say to my wife that I'm not a good teacher. There's something wrong with me. I'd look at others and they seemed to have a really good time with the kids. The kids seemed to enjoy those teachers. And me, well they were learning (there was no doubt about that). But I felt I was forcing them to learn. I didn't want it that way. I still feel I'm far from being perfect, but when I think about it, I'm always trying to make an effort to improve.
>
> That's one thing I've learned too; that we can learn an awful lot from those kids That's probably why, in a sense, I prefer teaching senior high. Those kids, I would say, are more mature. By being able to talk to them I'm able to relate to their way of thinking, much more than junior high. In junior high they would insult you immediately. If you did something they didn't like, they'd insult you and that's

it, there was a fight. That's the first thing I should have avoided. That was really hard on me. I would come home and be upset. (Tom sighed, paused)..I was unhappy, that was all. It settled down after three or four years because I was learning what they call the tricks of teaching. There were years that I would say I was happier, and then you'd get a bad bunch of kids. Then it would get back to the same old thing. I didn't have the knowhow for those kids. The good kids I never had any problem with. I could feed them all kinds of stuff and they would eat it and be nice. But it was always the four, five or six that would make my life so miserable.

The commitment today is totally different. Before I was doing it because I wasn't sure I could so something else.

Well, I knew I could have done something else, but I wasn't sure if I really wanted to do something else. I didn't really have a commitment to it . It was a job. And then when I took that course and really started to think about it,you know this is really not a bad job at all. Since then I would have to say that I have a commitment to the kids. I feel for the kids. I feel sorry if they don't succeed. I feel for the kids much more than I used to. It's not that I didn't feel for them before, but I was saying too much that they created their own problems. And that's not really true. we have problems. They have problems.

V. COMPARISION WITH LEVINSON

In the context of talking about the realities of their lives, the teachers expressed common ideas that led to the development of the themes in the previous chapter.

Moreover, in the discussions that led to the subsequent themes, the teachers shared ideas and concerns that seemed to corroborate some of the concepts that Levinson stated are common to people in the transition of mid-life.

Perceptions at mid life

Levinson said that there were three general characteristics of the mid-life transition (188 ff).

1.Men became aware of their age, they began to realize that they were getting old.

2.Men became aware of the end of their lives for this first time. They began to think about retirement, and became concerned about those years left.

3. They began to reappraise their pasts, with a sense of concern.

The following excerpts from the transcripts suggest that these teachers shared some of these concerns at this time in their lives. It seems from first analysis, that Levinson's constructs are reflected in their perceptions.

The ages of the teachers at the time of the interviews were:

Sam: 38	Fred: 44	Dan: 45	Robert: 47
Tom: 47	Jim: 47	Ernie: 47	John: 50

When asked about age, some responded intitially by saying that age did not affect the way that they thought about things. However, when they talked at length about the subject, common perceptions appeared.

Ernie (47) responded by saying:

> I think it's my friends that bring it up more than I do.It doesn't concern me. I'm not concerned about age. That's not very healthy. You can't prevent age...
>
> Now I'm concerned about the qualities of experiences. It's something I never thought about earlier. It's something I think about a lot now.

Sam started by saying:

> No. Age really doesn't make much difference to me right now. I'm 38. It doesn't play that big a factor in the way I look at things, I don't think (pause): In fact, in some sense it does. I found out that in teaching some of the best times were when you could just forget your age and become directly involved with the kids.
>
> I really don't think of my age as a factor, as of yet. But I guess that's not quite true. I think about myself. I'm now 38. I imagine what it might be like in ten years... There's the time perspective. You always have to look to the future.

Fred (44) paused to reflect upon the question:

> It must have somewhere. I don't really know how to answer that. I don't really know. (pause) Non job-related things for sure. To make sure that the finances and things are in order for 20 years from now. When I grew up my folks owned a farm. During

those times, things were kind of rough. They're really having a tough time of it (now) . They could have it a lot easier now. I suppose one of the personal things that I'm really concerned about is the future. I'm talking about retirement now. I certainly don't want to be in the position to count the pennies, like I did when I was in university. That boils down to doing some management and planning right now. And that I'm certainly doing.

Robert discussed his perspective:

I don't think about my age that much. I don't know if it affects the things that we do in the classroom...So I don't know. I'm not kind of an age person. I haven't got to the point yet where I wake up in the morning and feel like I need to go back to bed.

You think about your own children, your family. You think about the community, your life in it, your friendship groups, the church groups, others that you may have interaction with. You say, are they better or worse for my having been there. So I think you definitely get a little more philosophic; maybe not nostalgic, but I think you tend to look back at things and put them into place and say yes, this was something that was worthwhile doing..I think you definitely do analyse your life and say; alright, I've been at this game for so long. I'm not going to be at it too much longer. (about the above) I'd say I, for the last maybe ten years...I've probably done more in each succeeding year. I think just that your associations and your outlook on life and your experiences.. You look at your children growing up and wonder about the world they'll be in and how you can prepare them, and what you can leave to them that will be of value to them.

Tom responded:

Yes, I think about my age lots of times...Strangely enough I"m starting to think about retiring. I still have 16 or 17 years to go. I'm thinking more and more about that line. I want to prepare myself. I don't want to teach until I'm 65. I'd like to be able to stop when I'm 60. When I retire I would like to still enjoy life.

Dan looked at it in terms of his experience with stress. Not once did he talk about the future:

Oh, you can call it the midlife crisis, the grey hair type of thing... There are middle age

factor, problems, crises with your own children; household, mortgage problems. I'm very different now. When I started teaching I was a workaholic. I should have burnt out earlier. We need to share the problems we have.

Right now I'm not looking ahead. One thing, I don't look back with regret. A lot of people do that. I don't. I really don't wish that I had done something else.

Jim looked back and ahead:

There's a time in a person's life when you look back and say, God, what have I accomplished in this world? I've had 23 classes of students. That's not a lot of kids to have helped. (pauses) Time is short...I suppose I look ahead to retirement. As you get older you look back on things, and you look ahead, and wonder what you've done.

John was more philosophic:

No, I've never really thought too much about it (age).

He didn't look ahead:

I don't know. Probably I look ahead some, in the past two or three years, probably not as much as I used to. I'm not sure the reason for that..I don't think it's necessarily complacency. I think it's probably that I think I'm satisified with what I'm doing. I'm not looking at any stage or disruption. Probably I think maybe that you could put it down to that.

In specific terms, the teachers shared the folowing ideas that relate to the major themes Levinson discussed.

The Dream

Levinson proposed that in early adulthood every man forms a dream. while for some it remains an unclear plan, for many it is a vibrant and compelling experience. He contended that in middle adulthood, a man has to come to grips with his dream, to see it through, or give it up.

Levinson pointed out that the decision was not an easy one to make, regardless of the outcome.

The Teachers

Fred said that he hadn't really developed a plan or dream when , at fifteen, he became seriously ill. He subsequently had to adjust to a permanent physical handicap.

> I didn't really have plan. I was fifteen and involved in an awful lot of sporting activities. After I got sick, all that changed. I didn't really know what I was going to do.
>
> Through association with the nursing staff and the medical staff there, I met people and became friends with people who were professionals in their own right. I think somehow that might have influenced me, because I had it in the back of my mind, after I left there, I think I want to go to university. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew that I wanted to further my education. Anyway, it took a while for all that to come through. I dabbled in radios...I moved to Edmonton. Then I found this job with an oil company. That turned out to be a secure thing, the first real job that I had. ...then as the years went by I discovered I didn't want to do this the rest of my life (work at the oil company). I suppose that's when all these thoughts about going on and really doing well at university, came into play...Well the frustration (at the oil company) would go away, and then it kept getting worse and I said this is it. I've either got to make a move or forget about it!
>
> I haven't had any of those feelings about what I'm doing now. I like the staff I'm working with here. I've been treated really well here. I don't really want to leave.

John said he had no early plan or dream:

> I was a late bloomer as I was saying. I was in my thirties when I decided to go back to school..so I don't know. I never really thought too much about it.
>
> I think probably I didn't really have too many long range plans until I got involved in teaching. Then I started to look at things in the long term... I think the heaviest decision was probably the initial one, what field actually to go into, and I

think that once I had made that decision, that commitment, I certainly felt better about what I was pursuing.

Ernie compared his career choice earlier options:

> At one point I had considered doing a Masters in Fine Arts. but then again with the expectations of going back into the classroom. There were a few crazy ideas when I thought I'd go into professional theatre, but I'm glad that I didn't. ...I've always felt that teaching is where I belong... I'm a career teacher. I plan to teach until retirement.

Sam didn't have any plan or dream that he could remember. He had tried a number of different things when he was young, and maintained an interest in construction work as well as a hope of getting an administrative position.

Robert's dream was more personal:

> I think when I looked ahead as an adult, I saw myself as a father, not as someone in a career. Things in the family take on much greater importance than things in a career. So I looked ahead to a family that I could head up. My father died when I was six years old, so I learned from others around me. That was my goal. I don't think I ever looked ahead and imagined myself as a fireman or policeman, or any of those things. My relatives were all either policemen or doctors. So I guess I picked the one in between (laughs).

Jim's decision to teach was part of plan.

> It definitely was a plan. I got into it for a very good reason, much as a minister would go into the ministry. As a matter of fact, I thought about that too, but naw, that's not for me.
>
> It hasn't changed for me. Aside from being somewhat dissatisified, I think if I get into this new school, this is going to be a new ball game, and it's going to be great. I'm going to be just as hepped up, just as anxious to really put out and do a hell of a good job.

Of all the teachers, Tom defininetly had what he called a dream. The dream was not teaching and he described what it was and how he still was bothered by it:

> I had ambitions to go into engineering or architecture. In fact my dream at that time was architecture. There are lots of times that I still dream about it.
>
> So I stopped for five years (when he had to quit school to help at home). Those were the most frustrating years of my life. (Back at school) That really moved my spirit. I finished my grade twelve. Then I went into engineering.
>
> I came to Alberta...and decided to stay. Then my dream was shattered again when I found that they (the university) wanted me to go right back and start over...I wasn't really sure why I was taking education, just because they were giving me the credits, I guess. But I was too old. I didn't want to start over.
>
> The turning point was a few years ago when I decided not to dream anymore about this. It's useless, for one thing. So at that point I stopped thinking about it and became much happier in what I was doing. But as long as the dream was in my head; change; do something else; be happy in something else, I was totally unhappy....
>
> When the decision was made, all of that fell into place. There are still times when the old dream bothers me. Architecture would have been something I would have loved to do. If I had to do it all over again, I possibly would go into engineering and then architecture. That was probably my biggest dream. There was some meaning in it. Some, when they are fifteen, they have a dream, and then when they're sixteen, they have another dream. Not me.
>
> I'm not unhappy right now with what I'm doing. I'm not saying it's not worth it. It is worth it and it's a very important part of my life. There are times when I wonder if I was meant to be a teacher. Not so much was I meant to be a teacher, but was I meant to be someone else?

Dan had a dream he still valued, and it reflected his early university days, when he spent five years in training for an agricultural career. His final remarks hint that his dream hasn't changed.

> There was a dream that I had to contend with at one time. I looked at all the guys who left and went elsewhere, like into real estate. Well, the economy's tough and some of them are folding. When I was young I never thought about that. I had the values of having a good home, a good car. Now I

> weigh it all carefully, and think about other things. I'd love to own a strip of land. I would love homesteading... I had a desire to be with people. Now I want to get back to the good earth.

The Occupation

Levinson believed that men spend a major part of their early adult years embarking upon a clear career. By midlife, a man looks at the ladder of advancement and growth and evaluates his growth. If the career has lost its attraction, or if promotion has not come, a man may accept his position, lessen his commitment, and look for other important things to occupy his life.

The Teachers.

Jim was unhappy with his present situation. He had had hobbies and had thought seriously about doing something else. He placed a lot of hope in getting a transfer.

> In the beginning I was just happy to go to the university and educate myself and to be able to work with young people. It was exciting; great, great. More exciting then of course it is to me now. Since then I've got into building things. I built this basement and I built a boat. I do quite a bit of hunting and fishing whenever I can.
>
> I can't say that I've completely put aside the idea of going into something else, if something good comes up.
>
> I'm decicated enough to know that things are different in other schools. There are lots of better situations. If perhaps I have these feelings, then I can get perhaps into a new situation that doesn't have them. That's my intent on moving up to junior high. It's true I'll be working with elementary levels of achievement, but they are older kids. That sort ot buoys me up...

Sam actually used the analogy of the ladder:

> When I see other people I taught with, they didn't do anything differently than I did, and they moved up the ladder... I'd like to go back into construction on a part time basis. That's part of my problem right now. I don't have that release, enough physical activity. Maybe that's part of my problem right now, I don't have that release. ...I think that that'a nd area that I'll go back into, if I preceive there's not much chance of moving, so called, up the ladder.

Dan saw camping as a fulfilling alternative:

> I've had over 200 kids out on two-night camps. I've had sixty this year and I have another trip coming up. So that really gets a turn-on for me.
>
> A couple of my best camps were set up in the end of September. Parents did the cooking. It cost each kid ten dollars, and that included the bus and three days at the camp.
>
> For me it means that there's the opportunity for good affective education. It happens in a very short period of time, and has a lasting mark. Since then, in some of my burnout in teaching, that's been my saving grace.

Tom had worked his way through this phase of his life:

> Most of my friends are eight or ten years younger than I am. Most of them are very successful, principals or vice principals or whatever. For a while I thought, gee, I'm older than they are and I'm just a teacher. I thought too much about just being a teacher. That bothered me some, but I account that to that period when I missed so much from my life. Most of my friends applied to be administrators. It has no appeal for me. I'm not an administrator type, whatsoever.
>
> Right now I'd like to travel, but I'd rather save it for later on and enjoy travelling then. I also enjoy carpentry. I worked at Christmas building this den. In two weeks, I lost about twenty pounds. That's my enjoyment. Right now I'm building a playground in the backyard. I like a hammer and a saw, and a pencil behind my ear. That's what I enjoy.

Robert talked about a couple of small business ventures he had been involved in over the years. He presently ran a small ice cream store:

I've been involved for the past number of years in the fast food business. They are sidelights. It's a kind of diversion to the things I do in the classroom. That started about ten years ago, when I was about 37.

I couldn't see doing some of those other jobs. I could have stayed in a farming situation. I don't think I ever really seriously sat down and said that I'm going to write out my resignation. I seem to have enough other things going with sports and other interests, church, and a lot of friends, so that if I need my batteries recharged, it was always there.

Ernie had recent involvement in the arts:

There are other things and people that are important to me. Number one there's my wife and my friends. A chance to travel... opportunities to do interesting things.

When I started teaching it was like almost twenty-four hours a day. Now I have a greater feeling of my competency , and I have other avenues that require my time. I've had the opportunity of being the president of a couple of major city organizations. I'm presently involved in a major arts organization in the city , where I'm on the executive. I've quite enjoyed the opportunity...

John had become involved as a counsellor for a few years. He'd actually returned to university to get a counselling diploma, but he had recently decided to return to the classroom:

I seriously thought about what I would like to do, looking at the long term. I did a lot of soul-searching and weighing things. I decided I would like to return to the classroom. I think that's where I was happiest.

John also had developed an extensive repetoire of hobbies:

I think over the past few years..I have taken different hobbies which, when I thought about it, reflected on it... it was kind of a personal challenge. About three years ago I took up archery... and I worked my way up until I got pretty good. I set a new individual club record for the heavy bow. I guess that I'm that type of guy. I take

on a challenge and when I reach a point where I feel I've reached a zenith, then I kind of lose interest. I have other things going now. I don't go much to the archery club, but I do go in the summer, with a couple of friends, bow hunting.

A couple of years ago I got a motorcycle. My wife just about had a bird. I bought this old motorcycle from a friend of mine, and I never had a motorcycle before, and I didn't know a thing about them. So I worked on this thing about three weeks..and started riding around. Traded that in for a newer one, rode that for about two seasons and this year I got a little bigger one... and I have a TI99 computer which I bought. I have another friend who is quite an expert on computers, so he's been teaching me some of the basic language.

And at present I'm working on my basement. I'm finishing another corner of my basement. That's what I'm doing on weekends. A friend comes over and we kind of trade labour and (laughs)...those are some of the things I like to do.

Fred was different than the rest because he was presently considering a promotion. That seemed to color his thinking:

My concern has shifted away from how I'm going to present something in the classroom to how I'm going to learn all these little things that I've had to learn that I've had to learn about administrative things. There's the possibility I may get more involved in that in the next few months.

I'm taking stock of my position right now. As I say, I don't have aspirations to get into I suppose that if a person's upwardly mobile, those are the steps that you go through. I don't like that sort of thing. I like what I'm doing now because I'm doing some teaching, and I'm assisting our department head. So I get a little shot at some of the administrative stuff, some of the curiculum development, a chance to work on some lessons... I get the opportunity to do those things. I suppose it's nice and safe, because really , I'm not responsible for it. Somebody else has to take the flack. Maybe there's a little psychological thing there.

Right now things are relatively stable. They'll probably change again before too long (laughs). Change is good. It keeps you flexible. You kind of have to grow into change. It doesn't happen over night, in your own profession. Perhaps, sometimes there are jolts. But my career has been a very

enjoyable experience.

The Family

Levinson argues that most men rediscover their families in their mid years. They lose some of their concerns for a macho image, and become more domesticated.

The Teachers

There is no clear relationship in the data here. Two of the teachers were married but they had no children. Three of the teachers' children were young men and women, In two cases, teachers had younger children. There was also a variety of response.

John mentioned that he was married in 1964. He said that he and his wife had no children. John said that his present activities centred around home life, and around his leisure activities. He was involved in a major basement renovation. John said:

> Well, when I was twenty-one, what was most important at that time was going out with the boys...where was the next party... (now) my priorities are to give the best I can here. and while I'm away from here, a lot of my activities centre around home life...

Ernie and his wife had no children. He said that his wife was very important to him. He and his wife shared many of the same interests, and Ernie talked about the importance of a nice home.

For Fred, the major concerns were in the past:

> Of course when you first get started, you've got the usual thing; the mortgages, the kids to put through school. I had those concerns. That changes, that's certainly not the same now. Both my girls are on their own. The oldest one's married, and the youngest one's pretty well on her own. We certainly don't have the financial concerns we had before. We're both kind of slipping into middle age, or whatever you want to call it. We enjoy our summers and holidays. Personal concerns are certainly diminished.
>
> Certainly, for my girls, I want them to have the courage to try and do things. I want them to be responsible for what they do and know and take that responsibility. I want them to have the self confidence, to do whatever, and cope with life.

Jim mentioned his family once. He said that they looked at things differently than he did but that they were growing up well and doing fine.

Dan talked about his wife and daughters. His wife was a teacher, and his daughters were grown up, the youngest just finishing high school. Dan said he had increasing difficulty in attracting students to the camps that he organized for the students. For Dan, this led to frustration and stress, partly because he had had to leave his family a lot to go to the camps.

Robert was becoming increasingly aware of his family:

> I think the older you are, the less you think about accomplishments on the basis of money.
>
> You think about your children, your family...You say, are they better or worse for my having been there ? You look at your children growing up and you wonder about the world they'll be in and how you can prepare them, and what you can leave them that will be of value to them.

Tom was very attached to his family. He emphasized how his wife had helped him over the years to deal with his frustrations and work out his life. His family was his

strength:

> They're great! My family is so important. I don't know how I could live without my family. It's so exciting to see my kids grow. There's nothing more exciting in my life. That's why I don't mind building a complex playground in the yard. It's lots of work. I don't mind doing it for the kids.

Sam talked about his family:

> I don't do much outside the family now. I spend a lot of time with the family. I feel quite close to my two brothers and my mother... I do a lot of work with my brothers...My wife works weekends sometimes. In that case I go home and babysit. So we're busy.
> My most pleasure comes from my family. my immediate family. I've always felt that way.

Mentorship

Levinson stated that in their early careers, many men have probably had someone older their lives that helped them get established. By midlife those relationships were gone. Now however, the men who are now more mature may themselves establish relationships with younger peers.

The Teachers

Although many of the teachers talked about the positive influences older people had had on them when they were young, they also pointed out that times had changed. They had all worked in smaller systems when they started. The schools they now worked in were much larger, and more impersonal.

Moreover, they pointed out that because of tougher economic times, few of their friends were leaving the profession. They also said that because of the decrease in

school populations, fewer begining teachers were coming into their schools. Fred for example, couldn't remember the last time a teacher fresh out of college came into his school.

Ernie said that he had a positive experience with an inspector:

> I had an inspector who believed in what we were doing, who gave us positive reinforcement. It was a very small school I started in.

Ernie talked about a young girl that had developed into a singer because she had had the opportunity to see a performance, but he was wary of becoming anyone's mentor.

> I can't stand the idea of proteges. I won't start a cult. What happens when you're not around?
> Every drama teacher wants to be in there with successful students. The only problem is that they don't know when to leave. You'd like to be the little person, who started that spark in the first place. But then you remember that the greater bonfire's the kid.
> I had a teacher once who told me when I was fifteen, because of my reading ability, that I should be on Broadway. Well, he blew it, because I shouldn't have been on Broadway. But I believed him because I wanted to hear that. It was not a fair thing for him to say.

Tom talked about a good and a bad experience:

> That day we went to write a test and I couldn't even answer one question. So I went to the principal. I told him my story. I said, that's it. I tried, but I better go home now. He grabbed the test and threw it in the garbage. He said that that's not important. I want you back. Do whatever you can. My goodness! I'll never forget that man, not ever in my whole life. He changed my life, for a much better life, I'm sure.
> When I started teaching it was discipline and teaching. It seemed to be theonly thing I was doing. It wasn't what I wanted, but I didn't know how to get out of it . I was stuck...
> I saw one guy, probably the best teacher that we had at school. His discipline was perfect...You could hear kids yelling in the hall for about a mile, but as soon as they entered his door, there

was not even a peep.

I was trying to model myself after him...But that wasn't my style. I should have never modelled myself after him. I should have discovered my own style.

Robert had positive experiences in the school that he had graduated from and returned to as a young teacher:

There were a couple of teachers that I really looked up to...It wasn't the information, it was the kind of people they were. These were people I could talk to or watch...I could ask a question, or see how they were doing it. They were great people in their own right..And they were willing to share.

Jim remembered a superintendent:

He was a good old fellow. I feared him to some extent, because he could always find fault when he wanted to. but he was also positive.

Jim went on to discuss how the superintendent had urged the teachers to work together and share with one another, and how some of the older teachers had helped him.

Dan remembered a principal who had come to help him

Those first years I put in a lot of time. I had a tremendous principal who actually through marriage ended up being a relative.

Sam remembered a colleague:

The most help was another grade four teacher-librarian. She really helped me get started in my first school.

John remembered an early colleague who taught the same course as he did when he started:

We were using common exams, which was good at that time because you could compare results and I got some feedback on how I was doing. He was a good guy to work with, very enthusiastic, and very knowledgeble.. He was a heck of a good guy to start with.

He just happened to be one of the guys that was assigned one of the same courses as I was teaching. We worked together for about a year. Then I was

> asked by the head of the basic ed department if I would come and work in basic ed...after that we never taught the same courses. We always remained on good terms.

Fred remembered an apprenticeship where he had the chance to help a teacher as a student, to really learn from him:

> I felt that I learned more from him in the classroom in just how toget along with students, than I ever did at university. I felt that I really benefitted from that. He was always well oriented. He always had time for you as a person; things like that. He was fair.
>
> So it started at that time. We get together now and then. I don't know if I chat with him now any more than I do with anyone else. At the time it was helpful when I was starting out.

Although everyone mentionned important others when they were starting out, few could say they had the same influence on younger teachers today, mainly for the reasons listed previously.

Ernie stated:

> Now I teach in such a big system I can't begin to compare. I try to rmember if I taught with any more than one teacher who was directly out of college.

Tom didn't mention working with younger teachers.

Robert talked about the informal kinds of help he had given. He pointed out that the staff was getting older and that the opportunity;

> ... to make some kind of impact on younger teachers is not there.
>
> There are some teachers that are fairly new to staff. They have thanked me for providing some assistance, and cushioning some things, giving them some perpsective when the opportunity arises in the staffroom, or playing sports.

Jim mentioned that he had felt snubbed by the younger teachers he had met, and didn't feel they wanted any advice from him.

Dan, by contrast, had the opportunity to meet student teachers because of his speciality:

> I had a friend who had a degree in biological science. We worked it so he student taught for me. We ended up in a ten-year partnership on a condo. We never had a cross word in ten years, which is an unusual thing. That was a good thing. He's presently a master teacher in special ed outside the city. We shared much collegial as well as a personal type of friendship. The difference in age was interesting. There was a 20 year difference.

John didn't remember anyone is particular:

> Over the years I guess a number of people and I think we have probably helped each other.

Individuation

According to Levinson, the final stage of the mid-life transition was completed with what he called the process of Individuation. Here a man integrates the results of the decisions he has made as he faced the polarities of Young / Old; Destruction / Creation; Masculine / Feminine Destruction / Creation and the Attachment / Separateness tasks. Although the teachers talked about it from different angles, they all spoke about becoming one's own man.

The Teachers

All of the teachers expressed satisfaction with their own independance, or planned for it. Robert said:

> I believe that my classes today are as good or better than they ever were...I think my commitment to teaching is on par with what it was in the past. I think my commitment to life survival skills has certainly increased... So I think you definitely get a little more philosophic, maybe not nostalgic, but I think you tend to look back at things and put them into place and say: yes this was something that was worthwhile.
>
> Five years ago I went back to get my Masters. I had the opportunity again to look at things in perspective...and find out if I really wanted to keep walking into classrooms and entertaining children and trying to teach them something. So I went back and enjoyed the year in residence. The main thing was that I was able to sit back away from the classroom, and think. Is this something I want to go back into ?

Dan talked about the difficulties of sorting out his life in the midst of the stress he experienced. At one point he said that he wasn't looking ahead, and he didn't look back with regret. Later, he talked more about burnout and said:

> I would say as much as seven years ago, when I went back for a sabbatical, as a way out. Unfortunately, I took the wrong options. I probably would have been much happier doing personal interaction type of things, perhaps to increase my self understanding. Then that year might have been much, much better...
>
> I've always been a perfectionist type person. I've been dominant, agressive, critical. That makes it pretty hard teaching, when you're dealing with all ranges of students, and colleagues, who you see a lot of fault in. It's hard to be constructive, assistive to them, being aware of yourself. Because of the kind of person I am, when I lower my horns I skewer. Because I don't vacilate, I have problems.
>
> Another thing, I'm a jack of all trades. I'm not skilled in marking specific english papers. I had a desire to be with people. Now I want to get back to the good earth. Even though I took that sabbatical, I felt that when I came back, that I was stuck. It hadn't solved the problem.

Jim talked about the realities of the job:

I can't say that I've completely put aside the idea of going into something else. If something good came up, I probably would take it. But on the other hand, I'm dedicated enough to know that things are different in other schools. There are a lot better situations. If perhaps I have these feelings, then I can get perhaps into a new situation that doesn't have them.

Jim's life was also compounded with a health problem:

I had a health problem, a serious one. I don't know if in reality I've ever come to grips with that. I don't know where I stand. Five years have gone by and I think I'm okay. It looks pretty damn good, but the doctor says I may have a reoccurance in another ten years.

I know that I've got a shorter fuse than I ever had. I don't have the tolerance level that I used to have. It's got to have something to do with both age and the health situation. That bothers me, I've got to admit it. But if I can just have normal classes, or be with a group of kids that need help, and know they need help. I can relate to that.

Ernie, by contrast was positive:

I've adjusted to changes. It doesn't give me any problems. .. There are other things and people that are important to me. When I first started teaching it was like almost twenty-four hours a day. Now I have a greater feeling of my competency, and I have other avenues that require my time. I've had the opportunity of being the president of a couple of major city organisations... I've quite enjoyed the opportunity...

I became interested through friends and a commitment to the ideals of the organisation...After my office was over I was asked to join the board of directors. So I'm there on my own right...

I teach totally different subjects now. I'm probably more intertested in the student than the subject; the total worth of the student. Now I'm concerned about the qualities of experience. It's something I never thought about earlier. It's something that I think a lot more about now.

Fred talked about his concerns about a possible promotion. He also reflected on being more confident:

That's a change for me. It comes from being a little more confident with yourself. I guess you don't like to admit that you've made errors, but you

do. It's probably something I wouldn't have done a few years ago.

You kind of grow into change. It doesn't happen over night, in your profession. Perhaps, sometimes there are jolts. But my career has been a very enjoyable experience.

John had his hobbies and interests. Besides his teaching, he was developing a module for student use of calculators. Plus he was working in the math lab. John talked about stages of life.

I have gone through stages of growth. I would think, that with different experiences, depending on what you take from the experiences, I guess your point of view changes, if you learn from certain experiences...

I don't know about growing old...as we have seen... say with students..that maturity certainly isn't a function of age. (laughs heartily).

I once heard someone say that a person's ideas, not necessarily all your ideas, but a person's ideas change every few years. Your outlook, your point of view. I guess that depends on the person, what they take from experience, that sort of thing.

I think initially that my first concern was survival. (now) my priorities are to give the best that I can here, and while I'm away from here, a lot of my activities centre around home life, and leisure activities. So priorities have certainly changed for me over the years.

Both Sam and Tom had the same ideas about adjusting to their worlds. Sam said:

If this avenue is cut off here (administration), I'll finish the course and get my diploma. Then I'll take the courses that I want to take, that would be beneficial to me, useful on the job. I don't want to do that anymore, take courses others say you should take.I want to take courses where there's no pressure to achieve a standard other than what you set for yourself.

Then I'd like to go back into construction on a part time basis. That's part of my problem right now. I don't have that release. I found when I worked on construction that if I had a bad day at school. Nothing better than to come home and and grab the hammer, and pound the bejessus out of a two by four. It was a good release. People used to say,

> how come you're working ? I didn't feel that way. It wasn't work for me, it was a way to unwind. I think that's an area that I'll move back into, if I perceive that there's not much chance of moving up the ladder, so to speak.
>
> I think that's where I'm going to be. Then I'll think about things beneficial to myself. If I'm not going anywhere, then I'll make the best of the present position.

Tom had a similar plan, although he had never considered administration, and didn't plan to. He wanted to consolidate his recently fulfilling teaching experiences. He talked about the course that he had taken that he felt helped him so much:

> One (reason) was the credits... The main reason was that I was looking for an avenue to improve myself. I didn't want to take any course just to get three credits, or six credits and that's it. I wanted something out of it because I knew I had a problem. Nobody else was helping me so I had to help myself.
>
> I would say being able to relate to the kids is probably the biggest achievement of the last few years. And because of that, it makes me a little looser myself. I become a bit more at ease with my teaching and I think that I achieve better that way too...

VI. Discussion

Any suggestions or conclusions that are raised from the data analysed, are related to the context from which they came; a series of interviews with eight teachers. On one hand, because of the small group selected, any conclusions or suggestions drawn from the data, cannot be considered empirically conclusive. Yet, the extent to which they agree with previous research, or raise new questions, is important because they are phenomenologically valid . They reveal the insights of eight experienced men who have taught school collectively for over 160 years.

To understand education, we must understand the meaning that the people who are intricately involved give to the process. For some (Fullan: 1982, 295) the whole process of change for improvement in education depends upon an understanding of that meaning.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the themes in part one, and relate them to Levinson's model of adult development in part two.

The Themes: A Discussion

The teachers interviewed in this study were all teaching in the city of Edmonton, Alberta. They were all married. They had all taught at least ten years at the levels in which they were teaching at the time of the interviews. Two of the teachers were elementary school teachers. Two taught at the junior high school level. Two

taught at the senior high school. Two were instructors in an adult vocational school. All the teachers were men.

Six of the teachers were born and brought up in small, rural communities. Two grew up in cities. Three were native Albertans. Two came from Manitoba. One came from Saskatchewan. One grew up in a large American city. One was from Quebec. The respondents ranged in age from 38 to 50.

The summary above and the information in chapter four show that they teachers were a varied group of individuals. Their opinions and values were also different.

Jim and Sam were the elementary teachers. Jim had served as an elementary school principal as a young man, and expressed no desire to return to administration in the interview. Jim was concerned about the stress he experienced and he looked forward to moving to a special ed class in junior high.

Sam taught regular elementary classes, and had tried to get a promotion in the school system in which he worked. He was somewhat dissatisfied with his lack of success. Dan and Robert taught junior high school. Dan had taught previous vocational classes in industrial arts. He had also taught science. Dan had spent considerable energy in developing and running camping experiences for students. Dan said that burnout was a serious problem for him, and he wasn't sure if he would continue teaching.

Robert taught grade nine students English and Social Studies. He expressed a continuous commitment to teaching

and helping students deal with the world of today. Robert also had outside business interests that added satisfaction to his life. Robert felt the importance of the period of life that he was experiencing, and spoke about how he dealt with it.

Ernie and Tom taught high school. Ernie taught English and Drama and was developing skills in teaching English as a second language. Ernie had definite interests in the arts, and was involved with the city arts organizations. He expressed a life-long satisfaction with teaching. Ernie was professionally active over his career, having returned to university three times, as well as spending three years teaching in Europe.

Tom had struggled with teaching all the years he taught. He said that his early years were very difficult for him. He was still struggling to accept teaching as his life-long profession, and was coming to grips with a dream that haunted him over the years; that of being an architect. Tom had recently taken a course that he felt allowed him to be more accepting of students. He expressed recent satisfaction with his job.

Fred and John taught in vocational schools for adults. Fred expressed general satisfaction with his career, and was preoccupied with the implications of a possible promotion. Fred had gone back to school, after suffering serious illness when he was a teenager. He left work with an oil company and returned to university and obtained his teaching

degree.

John had also done something else, spending 15 years in the automotive business before deciding to return to finish his high school and obtain a teaching degree. John spent some time as a counsellor, but had returned to teaching. John had a well rounded life of hobbies, and expressed considerable satisfaction with his life as a teacher.

Discussion of the Themes

The themes represent the common ideas and feelings that the teachers shared. Many of the themes suggest that the teachers in this study shared a common understanding of what it means to be teacher. The common characteristics of teachers and teaching expressed by the subjects, suggest that teaching has not changed dramatically since Sarason (1971) and Lortie (1975) wrote about some of the same characteristics over a decade ago.

Hard Times

The first theme was "Hard Times" and it encompassed the varieties of difficult experiences the teachers shared. Ernie, who expressed the most confidence in his early experiences, said that he survived, suggesting the job wasn't easy. All the rest talked about the difficulties they experienced. Tom and Fred talked about the need they felt to be in control as young teachers. Discipline was a paramount concern. Robert shared his experiences of cramming the

curriculum into the students' heads, and of feeling guilty if the students didn't learn it all. John and Dan spoke about having to make due with shortages in books and supplies. Jim felt there must have been a plot to see if he could survive. Sam had to deal with the opinion of an administrator that he was incompetent. There didn't seem to be any difference in the levels the teachers worked in. It would seem, that regardless of level, early teaching experiences are very difficult for young teachers. Lortie was doing studies at the same time these teachers were beginning their careers. The teachers in this study did not differ in this respect from the subject in Lortie's study.

Second Choice

Six of the eight teachers had either done or planned to do something else before they became teachers. Only Jim and Ernie suggested they had always wanted to be teachers, and Jim was having second thoughts at the time of the interview. Robert saw teaching as just a job when he started, and had grown to enjoy it over the years. Robert said he did keep involved in other business ventures to keep his perspective in teaching. Fred had worked with an oil company for a number of years before he went back into teaching. John had worked in an automotive parts business. Dan had started in agriculture and talked some about some real estate ventures he was involved in, while he was a teacher. Tom had started university as an engineering student, and had always wanted

to be an architect. He spoke a lot about the temptation to go into other lucrative businesses as well. Sam spoke about some construction work he had done on a part time basis when he was first a teacher.

The question of who was the more effective teacher was not addressed in this study. It did seem however, that the most satisfied teachers were those who were involved in something else besides teaching at the time of the interviews. For example, Jim and Ernie shared ideas about how they had always wanted to be teachers. However, Ernie was presently involved in other things that interested him in the city arts councils. Jim didn't speak of having another important activity at the time.

The four men who talked about current satisfaction in teaching were all involved in other activities that were important to them. Ernie was involved with the arts. Robert ran a store. Fred had a promotion to consider. John was involved in many hobbies.

The other four were the ones who expressed the most dissatisfaction with teaching at the time. Jim was angry about the toll that stress had taken on him. He talked about things he had done in the past for enjoyment, and he spoke about considering another job, but he didn't mention doing anything else at the time. Sam was the same. He said that he planned to do some construction, and take courses interesting to him. He didn't mention doing anything important. Tom had high hopes for the future, but he didn't

mention any significant activity he had outside teaching. Dan was resurrecting his wish to get back to the land. He mentionned nothing that was exciting to him at the time, that he was doing.

All of the men talked about the important things they liked or wanted to do. The more satisfied men were doing those things. Whether stress was lowering the commitment of the latter teachers, or the decreased involvement in other things was causing stress, is unclear. What is clear is that all of the teachers talked the importance of doing something else besides teaching. Robert stated it the best when he said that he was involved in other enterprises, partly to maintain a proper perspective in teaching.

One other possibility arose from the data. Sam, the youngest in the group, did not talk about stress as a problem in his life. He was discouraged about not getting a promotion, and he was thinking about how he could maintain his motivation to teaching, but he did not speak about dealing with any of the symptoms of stress. Neither did John, who was the oldest. He saw few problems in his life, and alluded to the fact that his concerns were in the past. While it is only a faint possibility, it may be, as Medinger (1981) has suggested, that stress is related to the difficulties of passing through the mid life transition.

The Mentors

All of the teachers talked about others who helped them in their first years of teaching. For many, there were individuals who made that difference. In Ernie's case, it was an inspector. Tom remembered a principal. Jim remembered a superintendent. Dan recalled a principal. For the others, colleagues were important. Robert and Jim remembered the experienced teachers whom they were able to talk to and watch, and learn from. John remembered a colleague, and Fred recalled what he called an apprenticeship, with a teacher who helped him when he was still a student. Sam talked about a colleague who helped him out.

The relationships were informal. No one mentioned any supervision program or teacher evaluation that helped them. Jim talked about the superintendent who informally encouraged the teachers to share their knowledge and skills with colleagues. Fred said that his apprenticeship was useful, but that it was an informal arrangement.

The teachers in this study talked about stronger earlier relationships with others as helpers than the literature suggests (Lortie, 1975) (Sarason, 1971). Part of the reason may be due to the fact that they all worked in much smaller organizations, when they began their careers. Ernie, Robert, Jim all started their careers in small communities. Both John and Fred talked about how much smaller their schools were when they started teaching.

Times Have changed.

The teachers agreed that there was much less informal help for younger teachers in the schools. Some alluded to the fact that there were fewer students, and consequently fewer young teachers in the school. Robert noted that his staff was noticeably growing older. Fred had never had the chance to work with students. Ernie said he taught in such a large system, that there was no comparison with his early experiences. He saw the departments as the place for help for younger teachers. Sam said teaching was a lonely profession.

Dan was the only teacher who talked about significant involvement with younger teachers. Dan, as a specialist, had more student teachers, and worked considerably with them.

Jim and Robert suggested that the whole tenor in schools had changed. They felt that some of the younger teachers didn't want help. While John and Robert talked about giving some informal help to younger teachers, the others did not. Dan was the only teacher that spoke about developing a relationship with a younger teacher.

All of the teachers talked about the value of the being helped when they were younger. No one suggested they were significanty involved as mentors in their present experience.

Times had changed. The teachers did not relate having important experiences with younger teachers. The teachers attributed some of the reasons for the change to fewer

students, fewer opportunities for younger teachers. They suggested they were still willing to assume such a role. Robert said that he wished he could have helped some of the younger people. Sam said that one just didn't get a chance to share views with colleagues anymore. Fred thought that apprenticeship was a good idea, from his experience, but he didn't have the chance to do it.

If the perceptions of these teachers can be taken as representative of teachers in general, then it appears that younger teachers may have to begin teaching without the kind of help that these teachers had when they started out. The process of peer supervision holds out promising potential for younger teachers, if they could have the chance to work with older teachers who have the experience and insight about what constitutes effective teaching.

One wonders if advice from older teachers wouldn't be useful for younger teachers, especially advice given the light of what follows.

The Students

The teachers in this study had changed their perceptions of teaching over the years. Everyone talked about the importance of helping the student grow as a person. The teachers agreed that they concentrated on educating the whole person. Sam had been able to help a student who previously had had little success in school. Jim helped students care more about what they did. He felt it

was important to teach his students tolerance and understanding of todays minorities. Robert emphasized developing students to have self confidence and to be able to deal with the realitites of today's world. Ernie sought to give his students a better sociological perspective, a better understanding of who they were. Ernie said he was more interested in the student than the subject. Tom sought to give his students some sense of direction in life. Fred emphasized self confidence building, as well as academic success. John worked on having his students prepare well for what they were going to do.

The teachers valued the personal well being of their students highly. None of them said that they did this at the expense of the curriculum. The teachers saw their task in teaching as a process of fostering a combination of academic growth and personal development.

All the teachers sought to develop themselves and their students. Sam was taking a profesional development course at the university and he involved his students in a number of field trips during the school year. Jim had returned to university for post graduate studies. He ran an annual camping experience for students in his school. Robert had returned to the university for a post graduate degree. He was involved with the sports program in his school, and he organized many field trips for his students. Ernie had returned to university three times for further study. He worked in an organization which gave his students in drama

experiences with city dramatic performances. Dan had returned to university for post graduate study, and he ran a series of outdoor camping experiences for students in the school where he worked. Tom had returned to university to take courses to help him improve his relations with his students. Fred and John had both been active professionally. Fred was working on various curriculum committees. John had returned to university to obtain a diploma in counselling. Both Fred and John related the fact that their relationships with their students outside of school time was limited because their students were adults who tended to have lives of their own.

The popular stereotype of the older teacher gone to seed is not reflected in the data gathered from these teachers. The teachers appear as people sincerely and actively interested in the growth of the their student. Both Robert and Jim talked about teaching being serious business. None of the teachers held negative views about their students in general. Jim and Tom both talked about the "bad" students they had had, but both spoke of their efforts to work with those students, and to improve their own skills in helping these students learn. The teachers did not talk about lessening the emphasis on academic skills, but they talked about giving continued emphasis to academic performance in the context of student personal development.

The teachers in this study wanted their students to be confident, well educated people, prepared to live in a

cosmopolitan society with a sense of self-confidence and tolerance.

Coping With The Job

The teachers in this study shared a variety of perceptions about what it meant to be a teacher . Three of the teachers spoke about fulfillment. They were satisified with what they were doing. They expressed satisfaction with teaching. Five of teachers talked about the dissatisfaction they experienced and the things that bothered them. Four of the teachers spoke about the stress they experienced in their careers.

John was the senior teacher in the group interviewed. He expressed a general satisfaction with his work. He had made his choice to go into the teaching profession as a mature adult, after working in another field for fifteen years.

Fred had become a teacher after spending several years with an oil company. Fred enjoyed his work. He was excited about the possibility of a promotion, but he wasn't sure he wanted to leave the classroom. He enjoyed teaching.

Ernie enjoyed his life in the city; his work with the arts organization. He also enjoyed teaching.

Robert was cognizant of his age, and he talked about analsying his life and his contributions to younger people carefully. He was aware of the pressures of teaching, and he kept active in other work as well, to maintain his

perspective.

Sam was disappointed about not succeeding in getting a promotion to an administrative post. He was coming to grips with the possibility that he might not get a promotion. He talked about how he would adjust his life, and what would be important to him in his future. Sam was concerned about maintaining his commitment to teaching.

Dan talked about the effect of stress and burnout. He had previously taken a leave to get a rest, but he felt that burnout was still effecting his outlook. He realized what stress did to his effectiveness, and he was seriously considering resigning.

Jim was concerned about stress as well. He felt it had taken a toll on him. He talked about how it affected his health, and how pessimistic he felt about the situation. He hoped a new appointment would help him get relief.

Tom spoke about the stress involved in learning to relate effectively with students, and how it had been a long struggle for him. He wrestled with the dream he always had of being an architect. He talked about how he was confronting his dream, and accepting the reality of teaching as his career. He spoke about an important course that he had taken that he felt helped him develop a better rapport with his students.

The data from this study suggests that many of these teachers were affected by stress, and that stress in turn affected their work and their lives.

The teachers who talked about stress did not agree on its causes.

Robert suggested people suffering from depression were those who were locked in their pasts. They had regrets about things they had done, and didn't realize everyone has made mistakes. Robert was conscious of his age, and he felt the urgency to get things done. He looked ahead wih a sense of positive expectation.

Dan was concerned about his awareness that he wasn't caring about the students and his work. Dan didn't feel that his work was a cause. He cited his age, problems with his children, mortgage problems, as various factors.

Jim talked about the effects of stress on him; not eating or sleeping well. He felt his morale was low and The job was the main stressor for Jim. He alluded to the unreasonable demands the consultants made on him, asking him to fit their demands into an already overloaded school day. He talked about how unruly students were affecting him. He felt used by some of the female teachers on staff, whom he felt were dumping students into his classes. He said that just being at the stage of life where he was looking back and forward , was stressful.

Tom talked about how tenseness led to stress over time. He spoke about how he had come to grips with the main problem in his life; a dream to do something else. Tom said he had made a conscious effort to confront and give up his dream, and while it still bothered him some, he had begun to

feel better by just making the conscious decision to remain in teaching. He also talked about his improving relationships with students. Tom spoke at length about how difficult that long struggle had been.

The data from this study supports the literature on teacher stress and burnout (Blaise, 1982). Sarason (1982) reports evidence that where several physical changes in behaviors related to chronic stress persist, that the stress is probably work related. The teachers related different causes for their feelings. They agreed that it affected their jobs, although Jim said that he tried not to let it affect his work. Robert saw it in others, and used strategies to deal with it in his own life.

Because the teachers attributed stress to a number of different factors, no comment can be made about those factors, except to say that they were varied. Tom underlined the importance of the problem when he said that they suffered from stress, and stress was real.

The data from this study suggests that stress is a serious problem that over half the teachers were experiencing. There is little information in the data that suggests what the differences were in the teachers' lives that separated those who felt satisfaction from those who experienced stress. A number of tentative possibilites can be discussed. Mechanisms for coping with stress are important subjects that should demand the attention of those working with teachers and concerned about their professional

growth. The literature on adult development is one place to begin.

Adult Development

Many of the perceptions of the teachers in this study seem to fit with the characteristics of adult development suggested by Daniel Levinson. Levinson wrote that there are two age related periods in a man's life that are periods of transition. These two periods approximate age thirty and age forty. Around these times in a man's life, there are significant changes that a man faces. Between these ages, there is a period of relative stability. Beyond the transitional age of forty, more stability returns to a man's life and outlook.

Levinson wrote that around the age of thirty, men are choosing their careers, and making definitive decisions about getting on with their lives. He stated further that around the age of forty, men begin to seriously question their lives, and wrestle with the realities of beginning to grow old.

Levinson said that there are three characteristics of mid life transition.

One: Men realise they are aging.

Two: Men see the end of their lives for the first time. They begin to think about retirement.

Three: Men begin a profound reappraisal of their lives. They become concerned with adjusting to the realities of

their pasts.

The teachers in this study spoke about many ideas and feelings that fit with Levinson's model.

The relationship with age is not as exact as Levinson sometimes suggests.However,the age range of 38-47 that Levinson suggests as the parameters for mid-life transition, is reflected in the data from this study.

John, for example, who was 50 at the time of the study, shared perceptions that suggested he was past a time of certain concerns. He said that his concerns about looking ahead in life were minimal. He stated further that he had stopped thinking about those things three or four years earlier. He did not dwell on the subject in the interview. Ernie did not seemed concerned about age. he did say that he thought a lot about the quality of the experiences of life. Sam said he thought about ten years in the future. He said that he had to consider the future. Fred talked about a concern for retirement, that he was currently thinking about. Robert talked about looking back and putting things into place. He analysed his associations in life and said that he realized that he was not going to be at it much longer. Tom said that he thought a lot about age. He said that strangely enough he was starting to think about retirement. Dan saw mid-life as part of the cause of his stress. Dan said that he didn't look back with regret and yet in a couple of instances talked about the mistakes that he had made when he took what he felt was the wrong course

on a previous sabbatical. Jim said he looked ahead to retirement. He also said that he looked back and ahead, and wondered what he had done in his life.

The teachers in this study did express perceptions of their lives that agree with the characteristics of the mid-life transition that Levinson discussed.

Levinson talked about a number of themes that arose from the interviews that he and his associates did in their study. While the same themes did not arise from the teachers' interviews, many of the teacher's comments reflect the essence of some of Levinson's themes. As such they bear discussion.

The Dream

Levinson talked about the dream that every man devlops as a young man. For some it's unclear; for others, it's vibrant and demanding. At the mid-life transition, a man has to come to grips with his dream. He has to give it up or see it through. The decision isn't always easily arrived at.

Fred didn't recall having any plan. At fifteen he had to contend with a seriously illness that left him permanently physically handicapped. Fred said it was while he was in the hospital that the idea to become a professional gradually jelled. Later on, when Fred decided he had to quit the job he did have, he felt the compulsion to return to school and university. He said there was a time when he either had to make a move or

forget about it. At the time of the interview Fred had no desires at all to change what he was doing. he had made the decision years earlier, and was satisified.

John talked about wrestling with an earlier decision to leave the auto parts job and return to school and university. John was thirty at the time, and he said it wasn't an easy decision. He said that after he made the decision, he felt better.

Ernie didn't have a plan or a dream that he could remember. But he did say that he'd always wanted to be a teacher, and felt at the time of the interview, that that's where he belonged.

Sam had no dream that he could remember.

Robert had a more personal dream. He wanted to be the head of a family, a father.

Jim said that he had a definite plan to be a teacher. He felt he was similair to a calling to the ministry.

Tom perhaps had the most compelling dream. He had always wanted to be an architect. He never really came to grips with that dream, although he spoke about consciously confronting his dream, to give up that plan. He said he was feeling better about teaching because he had given up the dream.

Dan had a dream to work in agriculture. It was connected to a wish to get back to the land, which somehow related to Dan's early vacation on a rural farm

in Alberta. Dan related experiences that suggested that the summer vacations were valuable respites from his life as a child in the city,

Dan hadn't given up the dream at the time of the interview. He still wanted to get an acreage.

It would seem from this analysis that the teachers wrestled with their dreams, as Levinson's suggest men do. What is perhaps evident, is that the resolution of the dream is harder for those who have not come to grips with a dream that contradicts what they're presently doing. Those teachers who had always wanted to be teachers, or who had, in their thirties, made the change to teaching, seemed less concerned than those who were currently wrestling with a dream that conflicted with reality.

The Occupation

Levinson said that men in their early thirties concentrated on establishing a clear career. During the mid-life transition men reviewed their advancements and success with their careers. They felt either fulfillment or disappointment, depending on their perception of success or failure. In the context of mid-life, they renewed their commitment to or acceptance of their jobs, and if the success they had looked for had not come, they looked for other things to give their lives meaning.

Jim was investigating other jobs because of the stress he felt in teaching. He saw a transfer as a chance to renew his energy as a teacher.

Sam was wrestling with the possibility that there would be no promotion to administration for him. He tentatively talked about renewing his interest in part time construction work. He planned to take some university courses for his own personal interests. Sam used the analogy of the ladder of promotion in his discussions, an analogy Levinson said that men often used in such evaluations of their careers.

Dan saw his camping programs as a avenue to release his tensions in teaching. He was, at the time of the interview, seriously weighing his future in teaching.

Tom was coming to grips with his dream of being an architect. He was feeling much better about his relationships with students, as a result of what he was doing since he had a university course in psychology. He thought about taking more of those courses. He also talked about spending more time with his family.

Robert ran a business as a diversion from teaching. he spoke about taking a sabbatical, during which time he wrestled with the decision to remain in the classroom as a teacher. He saw his business as a chance to maintain his perspective about teaching.

Ernie concentrate on his asociations with the city arts organizations.

John had decided on teaching later in life, and had since then switched to counselling for a period of three years. He had returned to the classroom, and was enjoying it. John had also developed his hobbies.

Fred's considerations were colored by the possibility of a promotion. He was happy in the classroom.

There is a clear relationship between the concepts that Levinson talked about in his discussion of the career theme and in the lives of the teachers interviewed.

The Family

Levinson stated that men at mid-life rediscover their families. The men in this study did not talk at length about their families. Those who did, said that their families were important.

John said that many of his activities centred around his home.

Ernie mentioned his wife as one of the most important people in his life.

Fred talked about the successes he had had with his daughters, and how he and his wife were slipping into middle age together, now that the girls were gone.

Jim and Dan only mentioned their families in passing.

Robert put a lot of emphasis on his family and how important they were to him.

Tom talked about how his wife had been a valuable help to him in dealing with his problems. He said how valuable his family was to him.

Sam talked about spending a lot more time with his family.

The relationship to this theme is unclear. It may be that the teachers felt that their families were more of a personal concern, and didn't discuss them in the context of talking about their careers. It's clear from the data that the men in this study valued their families. It's not clear that they valued them more at the time of the interviews, than they did earlier on in their lives.

Mentorship

This theme will not be discussed in detail here, because it has been discussed in the section on teacher's themes. Two points are worth noting. Not only do the teachers remember important others in their early careers, the length of the relationship suggest a similarity with Levinson's discussion of this theme. None of the relationships were still important in the teachers recollections. Robert said the older two teachers were important, but the association was lost when he left. John and Fred both talked about important helpers in their schools, and of the valuable relationships that had developed. They also said that the present relationships were merely formal, and that

the former helpers no longer were seen as mentors.

Dan was the only one who mentioned being a mentor. He spoke about the helping relationship turning into a long range assocaition, with a man twenty years his junior. These points are brought up because they in essential agreement with Levinson's descriptions of mentors. The relationships were important and lasting, but they did end as the teachers became their own men. The other point worth noting is that only one teacher spoke about being in a significnt helping relationship with a younger colleague. One wonders if the privatism of teaching inhibits the development of mentoring relationships.

Individuation

Levinson said that this process signalled the end of the mid life transition. A man begins to integrate what he has struggled with in coming to grips with the young/old polarities of life. A man emerges as a full-fledged adult, his own man.

The teachers spoke about this in different ways. Robert was his own man in the classroom. He had returned to university to obtain his Masters degree. He said that he also used to year to decide on whether he wanted to spend the rest of his life in the classroom. He returned to the class and said that he had a mature perspective on teaching and was as good as he ever was in the class. Robert did not say that anyone had told him this. This

was his own perception.

Dan hadn't resolved his problems. He was hurting from the stress in his life, but he mentioned on several occasions that he didn't want to look back or ahead. Perhaps Dan was still in the process of deciding.

Jim talked about solidifying his place in teaching. He wasn't going to put up with misbehaving children any more. He was going to be more aware of teachers who tried to slip problem children into his classes. He recognized that his health and his age were two factors that he had to deal with. He was determined to become more independant.

Ernie was changing with the times. He was on his way to another specialist's certificate. He spoke about having a greater feeling of his own competency.

Fred was sure of his teaching, and weighing the positive experience of being offered a promotion.

Tom had learned how to relate with kids and the experience was fulfilling. The more he talked about his recent successes, the more positive he became. He still had to defeat the architect dream, but he had it out in the open where he could see it.

Sam was the youngest. He talked about the things he was going to do for his own edification, if promotions did not come. After he had defined how he would take courses interesting to himself, get back into part time construction, get some more computers in the classroom,

he described the situation that he said he was going to be in.

John was the oldest. He was satisified with his work, his home, and his leisure life. He had decided to go back to the classroom, after an experience with counselling. He enjoyed teaching in the classroom. The teachers in this study were all conscious of becoming more independant.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

Eight men were interviewed about their perceptions of their careers from the vantage point of middle age. These men were teachers working in various schools in Edmonton, Alberta. They were interviewed in the Spring of 1984. They ranged in age from 38 to 50.

Two research questions were asked.

What perceptions did these teachers have of their careers?

To what extent did the teachers' perceptions match the model of adult development extrapolated by Daniel Levinson?

Chapter Four contained the themes drawn from the study.

Chapter Five contained comparisons with Levinson's model.

Six themes arose from the data the teachers gave. The first theme dealt with the difficulties they experienced as beginning teachers. Theme two showed that teaching was not the first career choice for most of the teachers. In theme three the teachers talked about people who were their mentors when they were young teachers. In theme four, the teachers talked about the circumstances that diminished their roles as mentors for younger staff members. In theme five the teachers spoke about how they had come to value the students as more important than the subject matter. In theme six the teachers talked about the reality of stress in their

lives.

Four conclusions were drawn from this portion of the study.

1.The teachers' perceptions of their careers were strikingly similar to the lives of teachers described by Lortie (1975) and others. Teachers live in a world of private classrooms, which restricts their interaction with other teachers. The large city schools tend to increase this privatism. teachers did not see part of their role as professionals who helped others. Where such help was forthcoming, it tended to be highly informal and unstructured.

2.These teachers related experiences of having been helped in their early years by principals and superintendents, and older teachers on staff. The smaller schools of twenty years ago allowed for more professional growth for beginners.

3.The experienced teachers in this study were active professional individuals, concerned about their own professional growth and the development of their students. They periodically renewed their skills, and sought to provide students with an education that reinforced their academic growth and their personal development.

4.Stress is a serious problem for experienced teachers. Half of the teachers in the study shared experiences that suggested they were affected by chronic stress. The possibility exists that stress was linked to the ages of the

teachers interviewed. The two youngest and the oldest teachers, did not express perceptions that suggested they were experiencing serious stress.

One conclusion was drawn from chapter five.

There was a definite relationship between what the teachers in the study said and the characteristcs of adult development proposed by Levinson. This connection was limited to the characteristics of mid-life transition discussed by Levinson in his theory of adult development. The teachers shared experiences and perceptions that suggested there was a transition from middle adulthood to mature adulthood that happened in the early forties. Most of the teachers said that they were aware that their ages were important factors in the decisions they were making about their lives and careers. They related many perceptions that agreed with the perceptions with which Levinson said men in their early forties were concerned. Many of the important decisions that the teachers made in their careers happened around either the age of thirty or forty.

Implications

There are two implications that arise from the first section of the study.

Those who are responsible for teacher supervision need to address the reality of stress and its affect on teachers.

The data suggest that stress is a serious problem for many teachers. Most of the teachers were able to identify

the symptoms of stress, and some had developed coping mechanisms to deal with it. Some of the teachers worried about what Blaise (1982) called the problem of disengagement, where teachers suffering from stress, lessen their involvement with students, the very satisfaction they depend on. It is important that supervisors seek to help those teachers, and by so doing, assist in maintaining the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

If one accepts the assumption the current supervision practices are based on clinical models, then that kind of supervision in this context misses the mark, for two reasons:

Clinical models have not dealt with the whole teacher. Peyjack and Seyfarth (1981) point out that supervision should deal with the teacher as a person. None of the teachers in the study mentioned any help they were receiving on the job. In fact they made no mention of supervision that affected their careers. The fact that three of the teachers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to talk about their problems with stress, suggests the possible effectiveness of a supervision program designed more to meet teachers' needs. The need to deal with stress is evident.

In terms of what the teachers related, supervision had little or no effect on their professional growth. All of them, apparently on their own, had taken courses in professional growth recently. Everyone had either finished or been involved in study leading to a graduate degree or

diploma. They had gained the professional growth they felt was necessary, and seemed committed to continue doing so.

2. Experienced teachers have valuable skills and experience that should be used for collegial supervision of younger teachers.

Not all of the teachers in this study would have an interest in providing supervision for younger teachers, no more than all would be willing to work on curriculum committees or school budgets. However, peer supervision would be a valuable process for two reasons.

A. The teachers in this study demonstrated that they had developed a mature and caring approach in their dealings with students. They had developed skills and perceptions that would be eminently useful for younger teachers to learn about as they begin. Many of the teachers in this study had developed to ability to emphasize academic development as well as personal growth in their classes. This study agrees with studies like Miller's (1981): Experienced teachers have valuable information, and can serve as mature models, for younger teachers.

B. Two of the teachers alluded to a tension that exists between younger and older teachers. They feel that the students need to learn more than the information delivery skills, and they didn't want expereinced teacher's advice. The researcher found, in supervising student teachers, that many of them felt the older teachers were just filling spaces and had nothing to offer them.

A program of peer supervision could help in two ways. The younger teachers would have immediate help when they needed it, and they could see the worth in the older teacher's experience. The older teacher would also have a chance to see some of the more recent skills that the younger ones could bring into the classroom. Peer supervision would help to "crack the wall" of privatism in schools. Many of the teachers in this study had valuable insights and years of experience to offer.

3. **Teacher supervision should take into account the insights of adult development theory.**

The insights that adult development theory have provided for the understanding of how and when men and women grow and develop are useful in helping people understand and deal with themselves. It appears that an understanding of the difficulties of life's transitions can in itself help people to adjust more readily to the changes they are facing. It may be, in fact, that stress is itself more a symptom of the uncertainties of middle age transition, than a reaction to the stressors of the outside world.

Recommendations for Further Study

There are two related recommendations for further study.

1. **That the possibility that stress is a factor related to mid-life transition be further investigated.**

Medinger (1981) suggests that stress may be more a symptom of the difficulties experienced in life's transitional periods, that a factor completely related to extrinsic stressors. While this study only suggested that this may be the case, it bears further investigation. If stress can be conclusively shown to be a concomitant of middle aged transitions, then the concept can take on a different, and less threatening meaning. It can be seen as a transition that everyone may face, and grow out of, in the process of maturation.

2. That supervisors become more involved in supervising teachers as people.

This implies in this context, that further research seek to find ways to help supervisors become cognizant of adult development and its relationship to teacher supervision. Rather than seeking the causes of stress, it would seem more valuable to seek ways of helping the stressed.

While the teachers in this study related problems they had in teaching, they all related ways in which they were dealing with these problems. They did not relate having the opportunity to discuss their careers, and the problems they were facing as middle aged adults. From this study, it would seem that supervisors should spend more time familiarizing themselves with knowledge about adult development and in so doing, understanding better the teachers with whom they work.

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